Ethel Cottam
from dear Granny Tuckfield

64
6

(Dora Ellen Watney
(Auntie Effie's book)

GOOD LITTLE HEARTS

THE BIRD'S-NEST STORIES

a prize for Spelling.
Christmas 1902.

10 Wimborne Gardens
Ealing W

Barbara Whettle
from her Mummie
1934.

Printed by R. Clark,

FOR

EDMONSTON & DOUGLAS, EDINBURGH.

LONDON . . . HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.
CAMBRIDGE . . MACMILLAN AND CO.
DUBLIN . . . M'GLASHAN AND GILL.
GLASGOW . . . JAMES MACLEHOSE.

GOOD LITTLE HEARTS

THE BIRD'S-NEST STORIES

By AUNT FANNY

AUTHOR OF 'NIGHTCAPS,' ETC.

'I love God and little children.'—RICHTER.

VOLUME II.

EDINBURGH
EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS
1870

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO

MAGGIE PATON BOYD,

ROBERT CLEMENT BOYD,

JAMES PATON BOYD,

AND LITTLE

BESSY CRAIG BOYD,

FOUR DARLING "GOOD LITTLE HEARTS,"

WHO LIVE IN A BEAUTIFUL MANSE CALLED MILNATHORT.

MOTTO FOR ALL GOOD LITTLE HEARTS.

"Do all the good you can,
In all the ways you can,
To all the people you can,
In every place you can,
At all the times you can,
As long as ever you can."

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GOOD LITTLE HEARTS.

INTRODUCTION.

"ANY letters, Mrs. Marble?" shouted Fred, as he bounced into the little grocer's shop where the post-office was kept,—"any letters?"

"Patience *me!*" exclaimed the old lady, giving a start and pushing her wig up to the top of her head. "Look here, young leap-frog,—can't you come in like a Christian? You scared me awful! I thought it was a bandit in a green velvet jacket, with a two-inch tail, coming to rob the till."

"Excuse me," said Fred, laughing, and drumming with both hands on the counter, "but we are almost crazy to have another letter from Aunt Fanny."

"Who's Aunt Fanny?" inquired the old lady.

"Don't know Aunt Fanny? Did—you—ever! Why, she has written lots of stories for children, and she's going to write a thousand and one more. We get them first, and that makes it so jolly."

"Look here,—how *can* she write so many? She must have brains all over her body, like the frogs."

"So she has," said Fred, stoutly; "and some of her stories go right through your heart and come out at the back, they are so interesting."

"Look here, young stop-at-nothing,—when you have read a few more of them stories, you'll be worn into so many holes that you can hire yourself out for a cullender."

Just then the stage came rattling up to the door, and the old leather mail-bag was thrown down on the step. Fred rushed to get it, and long before the old lady could shuffle on her shoes, which, as

usual, she had kicked off under the counter, he had the bag at her side, and was begging her to hurry with the key.

The next minute it was found, the bag opened, and the contents emptied on the counter.

"Yes, here it is!" screamed Fred, snatching up a large envelope. "Thank you, Mrs. Look Here;" and he darted off at full speed.

"Look here!" cried the old lady, calling after him, "that's not my name. What a boy it is!" she continued; "I should think he lived upon yeast and soda water; he's all bounce and pop."

Not a word of this speech did Fred hear. Not one bit did he mind the hot broiling sun, but scampered home, sure of a loving welcome, the moment they knew what he had brought.

The other children were waiting for him at the garden-gate, and when they saw the envelope held high up in the air, they gave a shout of joy, and all rushed at him at once.

"Let *me* open it!" cried Sophia; "I'm the oldest."

"No, let *me*," entreated little Bob, who had just returned from his visit to his aunt. "Please, let me; I can do it so nicely."

The affectionate children all consented to this,—for these "good little hearts" "loved one another, in honour preferring one another;" and Bob's little fat fingers began to dig at the envelope immediately. His eyes opened wide, and he ran his tongue far out of his mouth, trying to pull the paper open,—and, to help the matter still more, he gave a little grunt every second, while the rest stood round, jumping up and down to keep in their impatience.

At last Bob got it open, drew out the enclosure and handed it in great pride and glory to Fred, who, calling out, "Attention, squad! Forward, march!" led the way to the library, where the whole party were soon seated round the table, and,

with bright expectant eyes fastened on his face, cried "All ready!"—and he began:—

"Pittsfield, July.

"DEAR FRED AND COMPANY,—

"I have received all your letters thanking me for the story of 'The Children's Charity Bazaar,' and telling me how much you like it. This assurance has made me feel very happy.

"I now send some stories, all of which have come out of the nest of one pair of little wrens. If the birds had not built a nest just where they did, these stories would never have been told.

"All the children in them have good little hearts (because I do so love to write about good and lovely traits, qualities, and actions)—all but one; and I believe he was changed and will be made good through the excellent example of the others; for goodness is catching. Remember that, my

darlings, and, wherever you are, be sure to set a good example.

"There are some very lovely children in the house where I live;—one little midget, whose name is Jeannie, told me that she would be four years old 'next *Apyil.*' I heard her on Sunday afternoon playing church. She was very serious about it, and preached a dear little sermon to the three little things who were playing with her. 'Now, my chillien,' she said, 'you must 'bey your *payyents*, and stay in the *yoom*, and not p'ay *yound* on Sunday; it's not *yight* to p'ay on Sunday.'

THIS IS LITTLE JEANNIE, FOUR YEARS OLD 'NEXT APYIL.'

"Wasn't this a nice sermon? Jeannie is very shy, and I did not let her know I could hear her. She comes up behind me sometimes, and puts her dear little hands on my neck, and smooths it; but if I turn round to catch and talk to her, she runs away.

"Then there is a beautiful little boy three years old, with light golden curls and great blue eyes. We are great friends now, but when I first came I was naughty enough to tease him. His name is Louie; but I used to call out, 'How are you, Bob?' and of course this made him angry, and he would answer, 'I'll lick you, if you don't mind!'

"That was so like a boy! But one day I felt ashamed of myself, and after he had threatened to 'lick' me, I went up to him. He was lying flat on his back on the grass, and I said, 'Well, dear Louie, if you should lick me and hurt me dreadfully, I would not hurt you for the world. I love you.'

"'I don't care,' he said.

"'Never mind if you don't,' I said; 'I love you dearly, and won't tease you any more.'

"The next morning I met him on the stairs. 'Good morning, darling Louie,' I said.

"He gave a little chuckle, and his bright blue eyes glanced sideways at me, but he would not speak, and ran back to his room.

"Presently he came out and said,—'I'm going to have my likeness taken, *I* am,—Arthur *too*.'

"'You are!' I exclaimed. 'Why, I'm astonished! Have it taken so,' I said, showing him a funny little picture which I happened to have in my pocket. 'You can be blowing a tin trumpet and making a tremendous noise. You like that, don't you? And Arthur can be beating a drum, with a feather sticking out of his cap.'

"Louie examined the picture with great attention, and found that the boy blowing the trumpet did not have his hair in curls. 'I want my hair cut

off,' he said, as the nurse took him in her lap to brush it.

"'Cut my finger off!' I said, holding it up. So he pretended to cut all my fingers off with a Spanish silver dollar his mamma had given him to keep him quiet while he was having his hair brushed. Then he sang,—'Shouting the Battle *Cried* of Freedom!' for me, as he called it, and then I went off into my room.

"His elder brothers, George and Arthur, are manly little fellows, and his sister, whose charming name is Grace, is as lovely and sweet as her name.

"Then there are Cora, Johnny, and a baby-Louie,—making another family,—and Attie, little Jeannie's sister,—and these are all the *little* children where I am.

"All but one, the pet and darling of the whole house,—a little fairy girl not quite two years old. Her name is Bessie. She laughs and talks all day long, and drops funny little courtesies to everybody.

She is urged to say a dozen things at a time by different people, and says them all with perfect sweetness, courtesying and smiling, never getting impatient, though it must tease her dreadfully.

"She is such a sweet-tempered darling! This afternoon she was running up and down before the door, dragging a little mite of a straw waggon about big enough for a doll, laughing and talking and looking so lovely that I just sat down and wrote these verses. Bessie's birthday is the eleventh of August.

"LITTLE BESSIE,

"ON HER SECOND BIRTHDAY.

"In the golden summer-time,
When the earth was flushed with flowers,
And the light and quickly fleeting clouds
Brought only rainbow showers,
Came floating out of heaven
A little angel-child;
And nestling in her mother's breast,
Looked in her face and smiled.

Like a white and tender rose-bud,
Her 'little life unfurled ;'
Two happy summer-tides ago
She came into the world.
Oh, the darling bonny maiden,
With her dimples and her curls !
Her rose-bud of a mouth, so full
Of wee white dainty pearls ;
Her large dark eyes all luminous
With sweet and tender light,
From whence her sinless soul looks forth,
So innocent and white !
God bless the little Bessie,
God keep her saintly white ;
And lead her through this changing life,
Unspotted in His sight.
Oh, may she ever rest within
The shadow of His love ;
Her tiny foot-falls guided on
With wisdom from above ;
And when with many happy years
Her gentle life shall cease,
May His kind arms enfold her soul
Within His perfect peace."

"And now here are my Bird's-Nest Stories. Be sure you find out all the good lessons hidden in them. And with love to everybody, the snub-nosed dog included,

"I am your affectionate

"AUNT FANNY."

CHAPTER I.

THE SCHOOL.

Not a hundred miles from New York city is a grave-looking building, with a learned air about it, surrounded by tall trees, and outside of these by a low wooden fence.

It is a boy's school, and is kept by a rusty old Professor so brimful of knowledge, and the busy thoughts which it brings, that he generally forgets to comb his hair, button his gaiters, or brush his clothes; and if it were not for his matter-of-fact, careful wife, no doubt half the time he would go without eating his dinner.

But with all his learning and absence of mind,

he is so patient in teaching and so good-hearted, which a smile of great sweetness plainly indicates, that all his boys love him.

The schoolroom is a large hall at the back of the house. Over the door are two lines of the celebrated Doctor Watts,—

> "Satan finds some mischief still
> For idle hands to do."

While opposite is the proverb,—"Patience and Perseverance conquer all difficulties."

Two merry, light-hearted boys went to this school, brimful of monkey-tricks and fun, but who would not for seven worlds have robbed a bird's nest of its eggs, or tied an old tin kettle to a dog's tail. Boys who do such things are mean, cruel, and false; but Frank and Theodore, though often heedless and playing a thousand and one head-over-heels innocent pranks on their schoolmates and each other, were manly, generous, and so

tender-hearted that they once caught a thoughtless little fellow who was chasing butterflies, and held him securely until the butterfly had flown away.

Theodore was an only child. He lived with his parents in a handsome house, the lawn of which sloped down to a large river; while Frank was only a quarter of a mile from him, in a beautiful cottage, over which a grand old elm-tree spread its sheltering arms. He had a younger brother, and a sweet little golden-haired sister, whose pretty name was May.

Frank and Theodore were two of the busiest beings on the wide earth. They each had a pony, rabbits, fishing-rods, and a dog, and, when they were not at school or studying their lessons, were generally to be found together, scouring the country for miles around on their ponies, or running across the fields with their dogs and fishing-rods, laughing, jumping, and shouting in a way

which frightened the very crows; so that an old farmer was heard to say that he would pay quite a sum of money, if they would scream in his fields till he got his crops in.

CHAPTER II.

THE WRENS.

"Oh, mamma," said little May one morning when the family were at breakfast, "I'm sure some little birds are building a nest in the cherry-tree. They go away and come back twenty times in an hour, bobbing in and out among the branches; then they both light close together on a branch, and seem to be talking something over."

"Of course," said Frank; "they are consulting whether a bit of lamb's-wool or a wisp of hay would be better on the north-east side of the nest, and wishing they dared to fly into the hall and help themselves to the soft feather in your hat."

"Oh, mamma, *do* they want my feather? May I take it out and give it to them?"

"I once heard of two wrens," said the children's papa, "who built their nest in an old hat which had been thrown up on top of a barn; and a mower once hung up his coat under a shed,—it was such very warm weather that he did not trouble himself to put it on for several days,—and when he did get it, he thrust his arm up the sleeve and found it completely filled up with what he called rubbish, but upon pulling it out, discovered it to be the nest of a wren, all finished and elegantly lined with soft, warm feathers. The distracted little owners followed him, crying and scolding him with the utmost violence for ruining their children's home; but finally concluded never to give it up, but go straight to work and build another in a safer place."

"Oh, poor little things!" exclaimed May. "Well, I hope no one will disturb our birds. Come out, Frank,—come Larry; let's see what they are doing now."

Out they all ran, and there, sure enough, were two little birds who seemed to be as busy as bees. By looking very carefully, Frank could see a small brown nest in among the upper branches. The birds were darting in and out—waiting for each other with the utmost politeness, and presently they both flew away.

The children watched them for many days. Theodore came over, and felt as much interest as the rest, and little May hoped that when the young birds came they would stay in the tree as long as they lived, and ever so much longer,—it was so delightful to have them there.

She ran out a dozen times a day to put bread-crumbs and bits of cake on the top of the fence, and fairly jumped for joy when the wrens flew down and began picking and pecking, hopping the whole time as if they could not possibly stop a single minute.

At last the eggs were laid, and the delighted

father sang his most agreeable tunes and brought his wife no end of caterpillars and little black beetles; which she seemed to like even better than bread or cake, much to little May's surprise, who would not have tasted either for a houseful of dolls.

Frank and Theodore worked just as hard at their books as they enjoyed their plays. In their school, appeals were made to the honour and good faith of the boys in such a sensible, loving manner, that it worked wonders. There was very little need of birch-rods or leather straps. They had a great field to play in, plenty of liberty, and all seemed to learn their lessons with a good will, and to try to be a credit to their teachers and the school; so you see, whether they were quietly in class studying, or swarming up the fences or high poles, or making the air resound with shouts and laughter, they were equally as first-rate a set of fellows as you would find in sixty-nine years.

Although the boys loved the old Professor, they *would* have their fun, like all boys. So they called him, among themselves, "Baked Pears,"—and really his brown, wrinkled face was not unlike one; while his careful wife was dubbed "The Brigadier," because she kept him and them under military discipline,—ringing the bells herself for getting up, for going out to play, for coming in, and for meals, to the very minute,—and always obliging the boarders to eat up everything on their plates, or else the remains were kept for the next meal; telling them that "wicked waste made woeful want;"—and she did it for their good.

I am mistaken in stating that they were all good boys in the old Professor's school. I ought to have written "all except *one*,"—a stout fellow with rough, red cheeks, whom every little fellow hated, because he kicked their marbles about, and punched their heads on the slightest provocation, or none at all. He did more hateful things in six

hours than Frank and Theodore did in six years; and more than once he had offered to fight them both, and, as he boasted, to "settle them."

Yet, when he felt good-natured, he was eagerly sought for to take a side at cricket or football; and as to climbing trees or running races, hardly a fellow in the school could beat him.

CHAPTER III.

THE BROKEN LEG.

ONE day at playtime Frank was eagerly telling a knot of his schoolmates about his wren's nest, and the funny stories his father had related, when Tom Bennett, the bad boy, broke in with,—

"I'll have that wren's nest before two days,—see if I don't."

"No, you won't do any such thing!" cried Frank, his eyes flashing.

"Frank has a very good dog," remarked Theodore, quietly; "if he sets the dog to guard the cherry-tree, the wrens will stay where they are."

"Pooh!" sneered Tom, shaking his head slowly. "Look here, Charley," he continued, calling a little

curly-headed urchin who was crossing the field. "Look here, would you like some pretty little speckled eggs?"

"O yes I would," said Charley, with sparkling eyes.

"Well, come round to my house,—let me see,—come to-morrow afternoon, and I will give you some."

"Oh, thank you, Tom," he answered, and darted off to tell of the fine present he was to get.

"Tom Bennett," said Frank, firmly, "don't you come near the cherry-tree, I warn you."

"Pooh!" answered he as before, and turning on his heel, went off whistling.

When Frank got home, he told at the table of the ruin which threatened the home and happiness of the poor birds, and begged all in the house to keep a strict watch to protect their dear little neighbours.

But, oh dear me! it always happens that when

you think you are most careful, you are caught napping; for that very evening after sundown, when the family had concluded that all danger to the birds was over for that night,—that night the enemy was upon them.

Theodore had come in to spend the evening with his friends, and bring them some of the fine Havana oranges an uncle had just sent him from Cuba. They were all sitting at a table looking over a number of fine engravings, when Theodore raised his head suddenly, and listening, as if he had ears for a dozen, said, "I heard the latch of the gate click. It can't possibly be Tom."

"Let's run and see," cried Frank.

Out they rushed, as bold as lions; but alas! two minutes too late, for Tom had been up the tree, and was just making of with the nest in his hand. The boys knew this by the anguish of the little birds, who were flying round and round, crying in the most distressed manner.

"Oh, Theo! he's got it!" exclaimed Frank, and off he darted after him at full speed, Theodore following just as quickly.

And now commenced a most desperate race. Fast and faster flew Tom, and fast and faster flew the boys after him. It seemed more than an even chance that Tom would get off, when looking back, to shout defiance at his pursuers, he stumbled over a cow that had lain down directly in the road, and fell head-over-heels to the ground, though still keeping the nest in his hand.

In an instant Frank and Theodore were upon him. They seized the nest, and ran back in triumph, feeling as they went for the eggs, three of which were still inside; how many had been lost, they had no means of telling.

But before they had gone far, Tom had picked himself up, and furious with anger, tore back after Frank and Theodore with might and main. They reached the garden-gate just before him; it shut

with a spring latch, and, not waiting to put his hand inside to unfasten it, Theodore leaped over, like a big grasshopper, undid it for Frank, and they stood within, with Frank's father, mother, Larry, and little May surrounding them, just as Tom arrived, panting with rage and haste.

"Give me that nest!" he shouted, stamping on the ground. "Give it to me."

"Never!" returned both the boys.

"Go away, you wicked boy," said Frank's father, coming forward. "You ought to live with a house full of cats, for you don't seem to know any better than they what a cruel thing you have been doing. Go home immediately."

The bad boy slunk off, with a revengeful look at the others. He did not go far, but hid behind a tree to see what they were going to do with the nest, muttering to himself,—"I'll have it yet."

Twilight had come on, but it was determined that it should be placed at once in the very place

from whence it had been so rudely torn. The poor little birds were still flying wildly round, and May was crying bitterly at their distress.

And now a generous dispute arose as to which should climb the tree, but it was quickly decided in favour of Theodore, as a courtesy to their guest. First taking off his coat, he sprang up like a lithe young panther,—Frank giving him a back, while the nest, tied in his pocket-handkerchief, he held firmly with his teeth. Not a word was spoken, though little May stood with her hands tightly clasped; Larry, in his anxiety, stood on one foot, and the rest gazed up with all the eyes they had.

"There," cried Theodore triumphantly. "There! it is just as good as ever, in spite of Tom, who is no better than a coward to come here and rob the birds in the dark."

Ah! Tom heard himself called a coward, and mad with rage, he picked up a stone and threw it into the tree with all his force. In an instant,

five hundred stars seemed to rush out of Theodore's eyes; then a sudden blindness seized him: he tried to catch at a limb of the tree,—he felt himself going; then a quick dizziness came over him, and crash—crash! down he fell headlong through the branches to the ground,—his right leg doubled up under him.

He lay insensible until he found himself in the parlour,—Frank kneeling by his side holding his hand, while some kind person with a soft, tender touch was bathing a wound in his head, which ached dreadfully.

He attempted to move, and screamed out with the torture it gave him. His leg was broken.

Then it seemed that his own kind parents were there, leaning weeping over him,—while Frank, with a pale face and streaming tears, was telling how it had all happened.

He could not help groaning with the dreadful pain, though every convulsive cry seemed to in-

crease his dear mother's tears,—and when the doctor who had been sent for came into the room, he began to sob bitterly in the midst of his groans.

Then a strange, stifling odour, which seemed to come from a pocket-handkerchief they held to his face, gave him first a very unpleasant, then a peaceful, painless feeling, and once more he became insensible. The doctor had administered chloroform in order to set his leg.

After a while he seemed to waken out of a sleep, and lay quite still, with an ashy face and making no sound but a low moan, which was more pitiful to hear than the loud groaning.

His leg had been set and splintered, and the swollen, tortured flesh had been bandaged up; his kind mother was beside him holding his hand. Big tears were falling slowly down her cheeks.

In a low, broken voice, he said, "Do not cry, dear mamma; God will give me strength to bear it. Do not be angry with Tom, he did not mean

to"—. His lip quivered painfully, and he could not go on; but the noble-hearted generous boy did not, would not believe that his schoolmate *intended* to do him this dreadful injury.

The little birds had fluttered round awhile, but were now quietly sleeping,—the mother covering with her soft, warm breast the eggs which it had cost Theodore so much to restore to her.

And now came long weary days of confinement and pain. Frank suffered in his way nearly as much as his beloved friend. He would come and gaze at Theodore with a loving, sad look, and then suddenly rush out of the room in an agony of grief, while dear little May and Larry brought their sweetest flowers to him; and May was heard to lament in earnest tones that boys did not care to play with dolls, else Theodore should have her lovely wax-doll that always shut its eyes and went to sleep when she was laid down. Yes, she would have given it to him for his "very own."

CHAPTER IV.

TOM DISGRACED.

"Oh, Theodore," cried Frank, coming into his room about a week after the terrible misfortune, —"oh, Theo! Tom has been expelled from school, and I am jolly glad!"

"Why, Frank, how *did* the Professor come to know it? *I'm very sorry.*"

Only see what a good little heart! He grieved that his enemy should be punished.

"*I'm* not,—I'm *glad!* It serves him just right!"

"But how did the Professor know it?" repeated Theodore.

"Well," said Frank, "I told some of our fellows, and they were precious mad!—they all wanted

to fight him! And then, you know, it is all over the village, and the Professor, in spite of his thinking all the time of Latin roots and wearing his shoes untied, would not leave such awful wickedness unpunished; so he called Tom up to-day, before the whole school. Oh, Theo, I never saw old Baked Pears look so before! It really seemed as if he was going to condemn Tom to death! He talked to him in such a stern voice, and his eyes fairly flashed when he spoke of the cruelty of what Tom had done. He said it could only proceed from a bad heart,—and then he requested him to pack up his books and clothes and leave the school, never to return. If Tom's heart beat as mine did when the Professor said this, he must have thought there was a drum inside of him, with a drummer beating a tattoo."

"Oh, Frank! and what did he say?—anything?"

"Yes; but at first he stood stock-still with all the red colour gone out of his cheeks; then he looked up once at the Professor. He seemed to be struggling against some wicked feeling. Then his lip trembled, and he said, 'I was mad with rage, sir, but I did not mean to break Theodore's leg;' — and going close, he continued, 'Good-bye, sir; I wish I had been a better boy!' And oh, Theodore! *then* he burst into tears, and ran sobbing out of the room."

"Oh, poor fellow!" exclaimed Theodore. "Frank, just reach me a sheet of note-paper and a pencil, and raise me up a little,—do,—there's a good fellow."

"What do you want to do, my darling boy?" asked his mother, who was sitting by the window sewing.

"I want to write a note to Tom, mamma; please let me."

The tears started into his mother's eyes, but she rose silently to help him, thanking God in her heart for the blessing of such a son.

With some difficulty the wasted frame of the boy was lifted into a sitting position. The exertion and excitement of feeling he was in, made him faint for a moment, and tears, proceeding from his great weakness, filled his dark, beautiful eyes, now sunken and sad.

Bravely did the little fellow pinch his lips tightly together. Not a cry escaped him; and when at last he was settled as he wished, with pillows supporting his back, he curled his arms round his mother's neck, and kissing her fondly, said, "Thank you, dear mamma, I am quite comfortable."

Then arranging the paper on a large book in his lap, he wrote with a hand, oh, how thin and trembling! this note:—

"DEAR TOM,—

"I know you are very sorry that you have hurt me so much. You did not mean to do it. I forgive you, and I love you, dear Tom; and before you go away I shall be very glad to see you. Do come, old fellow.

"Your sincere friend,

"THEODORE."

After all, Tom was not altogether a bad boy. He was in his room collecting his things, and feeling very miserable and lonely,—for the other boys avoided him,—when Theodore's note was handed to him. He opened it, read it: his heart swelled, his hands trembled: great sighs burst from his lips, and he broke all at once into a passion of crying, and sank into a chair perfectly convulsed with sobs.

"Oh, what *will* become of me!" he exclaimed at last; "everybody hates me but Theodore, and

he ought to hate me. Oh, how kind he is! I wish I could be so good! I almost wish I was dead! He forgives me; but will God ever forgive me?" And he sobbed till it seemed that his heart must break.

Then a "still small voice" within him softly said, "Ask God to forgive you;" and with the voice came a memory of this blessed promise,—"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

Still sobbing, he knelt down and humbly and simply asked God to forgive him for what he had done to Theodore, for his cruelty to the innocent birds, and for all his sins; and then, with a quiet, but very sad heart, went on with his preparations for leaving.

When all was ready he determined to ask permission of the Professor to visit Theodore.

"I have received a note from him," he said, his lips quivering; "he wants to see me, sir, to—to—forgive me."

The expression of his kind teacher's face as Tom spoke was sad, yet approving. "Well, my boy, you may go," he said; "and when you leave here make a steadfast resolution to amend; for, recollect, repentance is not amendment, unless it is 'repentance unto life,'—which means, repentance *in* the life and *for* life. The one is ice only *broken,* while the other is ice *melted.* Do you understand?"

"I think I do, sir," faltered Tom; "and I will try to repent for my whole life, I promise you."

With a beating heart he went to make his visit to Theodore. He half dreaded, half longed for it. You understand, of course, that all this time the noble little fellow had been at Frank's house; for the doctor did not approve of his being moved until the broken bone in his leg had knit together.

He was getting on slowly, but doing well, and in a few days he was to be carried to his own home. His mother stayed with him night and day, while Frank's mother and the whole family were unwearied in giving him every possible comfort. All his favourite schoolmates had been at the gate to send in kind messages, and the old Professor had actually stopped twice in his search for Latin roots to call and ask how he was,—though he walked the whole way—about half-a-mile—with his gaiters unbuttoned, and the ends of his white cravat flying behind his left ear, like pennons waving in the breeze.

Tom reached the gate, and lingered a moment to collect himself. Then he went in, and in a strange, broken voice asked to see Theodore.

He was invited up-stairs; he knocked softly at the door; a moment more, and he stood in the room.

At the sight of the pallid face, the sharp, thin features of which told a tale of such great suffering, his colour fled, and he stood quite still, gazing at Theodore, while a dreadful choking arose in his throat.

"Dear Tom," said the lovely boy, reaching out his hand to him, "do not look so distressed,—do not turn away; come here,—won't you, Tom?"

"Oh, Theodore!" he cried, rushing to the bed-

side and throwing himself on his knees beside it, —can you, will you ever forgive me? Oh, what would have become of me if you had"—

"If I had died? do you mean that, Tom? Well, I should have forgiven you all the same, as I hope my dear Saviour will forgive me. But God has been very kind to me, and I am not going to die. Perhaps this has been intended as a blessing to us both. You will never again be cruel to birds, —of that I am sure,—while I hope that I shall try more than ever to make every one around me happy. Cheer up, old fellow. Here, mamma; come and shake hands with Tom, and call Frank, if you please."

His mother, in a few broken, trembling words, assured the repentant boy of her forgiveness, as she pressed his hand. Her kind manner brought big tears in his eyes, and he could only hide his face and sob as she spoke; he could not answer her; and when Frank came in, and at an imploring look

from Theodore laid his hand on Tom's shoulder, and said, in his old hearty way, "Don't cry, old fellow; we'll be friends after this. It's all made up!" he felt that his whole life spent in trying to "be good and to do good" would be the least he could do for the possession of such noble, generous friends.

"I'll go right off and ask the Professor to change his mind about expelling you!" cried Frank. "He can't insist upon it when he knows how sorry you are;" and he was darting away when Tom said,—

"Oh, no, Frank; I deserve the disgrace; don't ask him; perhaps I shall learn somehow to be a better fellow in another place. I'm so glad Theo has forgiven me. That's a comfort any way." Then he threw his arms quickly around each, and bade them good-bye.

He was hurrying away, when Theodore's father entered and sat down near his mother. Tom shrank back, and seemed as if he would creep out of the

room; but squeezing his hands tightly together for a moment, as if to give himself firmness, he walked up to them, his face flushing painfully, and said,—

"I've come to ask your pardon again, and bid you good-bye."

The mother turned her face, pale and weary with watching, towards him, and taking his hand, said, "You will be a better boy after this, and pray God you may grow up to be a good man."

The father shook his hand in silence,—he felt too much to speak; but Tom thought that he looked kind, and he went away less unhappy than when he came.

CHAPTER V.

THE DELIGHTFUL SURPRISE.

In a few days more Theodore was so much better that the doctor gave permission to have him removed. His father procured a hospital-litter, and hired two strong, steady men. The poor little fellow was tenderly laid on the mattress which rested on the litter; the curtains were drawn aside, —as it was a lovely summer morning,—and with his father and mother on one side, and Frank, Larry, and little May on the other, he was carefully carried to his own pleasant home.

There, in a large cheerful room, the windows of which came down to the floor, giving a view of the bright, smooth lawn, and river beyond, Theodore passed many days.

But everybody in the house and out of it tried to make his confinement pleasant. Archie, the Scotch gardener, brought in every morning a saucer of strawberries of such surprising size, that one very nearly made two bites. Poor old blind Mrs. Bobbitt sent him a bottle of medicine, made after a recipe of her own,—a funny sort of present, to be sure, but it showed the kindness of her heart all the same; while lame Moses, the boatman, presented him with a little sloop which he had made on purpose,—completely rigged, and only waiting to be laden with freight to sail to the other end of the world.

Yet, in spite of all this, Theodore had some weary hours; and no wonder; for sitting still humdrum, or lying down the whole day, was slow work for an active boy, used to riding, racing, and jumping all the time he was away from school; and one evening he told Frank that he longed to be out-of-doors once more. "To-morrow," he

continued, "the doctor says I may walk twice round the room on my new crutches, which are coming; but oh, Frank! if I could only run a race with our fellows in school, it would be *so* jolly."

Theodore on crutches! It really sounded dreadful; and when Frank told of it at recess next day, just after the boys had been having a splendid game of leap-frog, every little fellow declared he was just as sorry as he could be, and each one gave an extra kick out in the air with his own legs, to make sure that such useful and precious limbs were all right.

"I tell you what!" exclaimed Frank suddenly, —"let's all write him a funny or interesting account of some adventure which has happened to us in our lifetimes. We've all broken our noses, and tumbled down-stairs, and jumped out of windows, or got into some perfectly awful scrape some time or other,—haven't we?"

"Yes indeed," cried little George. "I can tell

him how I once played 'Follow my Leader,' when our leader was the *daringest* fellow you ever saw. He made us follow him through brooks and over high fences; he made us swarm up the side of the house by the water-pipe, and run along the roof, like cats hunting up acquaintances; down through the scuttle-door, out again, and ending by disappearing in a well. *He* had a pair of India-rubber boots on, which reached up to his thighs, and did not care a snap for a wetting; but never mind! down we all swarmed after him, and I do believe if the water had not been very low, some of us would have been drowned, for we had to get up by the rope and the bucket, and it was pretty slippery work. I know I fell back twice, and was the last one up. I was as wet as sop; and what's more, I got a thrashing, for *I* was seen scrambling out, while all the rest, by that time, were a mile off."

The boys laughed heartily over this story, and

Frank declared it would do capitally for Theodore; so little George promised to write it that very afternoon.

But some of the boys objected, because they "did not know what to write about," they said.

"Oh, yes, you do!" cried Frank, who was determined upon it. "You *must;* Theo is such a good fellow! he will like any kind of a story. *Come,* old fellows! Do as you would wish to be done by. If you had broken five or six of your legs apiece, I guess you would be thankful for any amusement."

The boys nodded and laughed, and Frank made them promise at least to try, as the bell rang for study.

That evening he had a private talk with Theodore's mother; and when he went home he carried away with him a beautiful dove, one of his friend's most precious treasures.

It was a white dove, so tame and fearless that

it would often fly into the windows of the house, and hop about the tables looking for crumbs. It would come at a call from Theodore, and perch upon his hand or the top of his head; and Frank knew the surprise would be all the greater and more delightful if the dove helped him in his loving plan.

The next afternoon, John Brown, who was called doctor by his schoolmates, and was one of the oldest and best boys in the school, handed a paper to Frank, saying, with a bright blush, "Now, old fellow, no one is to see this but you and Theo. I can't write well enough for ladies to read."

Frank laughed, and ran all the way home in his joy. In five minutes the letter was fastened under the wing of the white dove by a blue ribbon, which was afterwards tied round its neck. Frank had begged this blue ribbon of his mother,—because, he said, it would seem "so very romantic, you

know." And he repeated the words of a song he had heard, altering it a little to make it suit:—

"Come hither, thou beautiful rover,
Thou wanderer of earth and of air,
And carry this capital story
With very particular care.

"'Tis written on copy-book paper;
With a steel-pen the writer did try
To tell of some comical caper,
So up, bird! away with thee!—fly!!"

The dove darted high up into the blue air with great swiftness, where, for a moment, it seemed poised like a tiny white cloud; then it swept down with almost incredible velocity, and disappeared in the grounds belonging to Theodore's house.

Frank had given Archie, the gardener, his instructions. He hastened to his friend's house as fast as he could go, and arrived breathless,—but

ran right up into Theodore's room, who was sitting at the window gazing listlessly out.

His face brightened when he saw Frank, and he exclaimed, "Well, old fellow, the whole house has been up this morning to see the baby learning to walk. I went round the room in style,—a kind of corkscrew style,—with my new wooden legs;" and he pointed to two crutches resting against the wall.

"Well, you really *are* coming on," said Frank, taking up the crutches to examine them; then, putting them under his arms, he took a prodigious leap across the room; the crutches slipped on the carpet, and they flew one way and he another, sprawling full-length on the floor.

Theodore shouted with laughter. "I can do better than that," he said; "and I would show you this minute, only mamma says I must not rest my weight on my leg again to-day. I think four

legs are two too many for you, and you had better stick to your original number."

Frank laughed, and went to the window. There stood Archie below, holding the white dove. Frank made a sign, and the gardener threw the bird up. It flew immediately into the window, and lighted on a table at Theodore's elbow.

"Why!" he exclaimed, "why, what is this? something that looks like a letter tied to my white dove's wing: how very strange!"

He took the bird on his knee, untied the ribbon, and looked at the letter without speaking.

"Well," said Frank, "who is it directed to? Put on your spectacles and see."

"It is directed to me," answered the wondering boy: "how *very* strange!"

"Suppose you open it," suggested Frank, enjoying the scene amazingly, and looking over his shoulder. "It *is* for you, as sure as eggs are eggs. I fancy it is a letter from the President of the

United States, making you a Brigadier-General, there are so few in the army."

Theodore took off the envelope, and in the greatest surprise read the following :—

CHAPTER VI.

WHO KNOWS BEST,—FATHER OR SON?

JOHN BROWN had an excellent father and mother. They fed him well, clothed him warmly, and sent him to a good school, to learn what a New York city alderman called "his three Rs,"—by which the alderman meant, it is supposed, his Reading, Riting, and Rithmetic. (I hope none of my "good little hearts" reading this will do more than bounce out of their seats and bounce back again, before they find out which of these words the alderman did not know how to spell correctly.)

John's parents also taught him to read his Bible and say his prayers,—so that if he did not know how to be a first-rate boy it was his own fault.

He was a pretty good sort of chap, after all said

and done; but one thing was certain,—he loved dearly to have his own way, and sometimes committed the awful blunder of thinking that he knew a great deal more than his own father and mother. Did you *ever* hear of such a singular thing before?

As to all the little fellows he played with, he was *certain* he was smarter than they: on this point his mind was made up.

And so when Master John got *too* conceited and outrageous, his parents generally let him punish himself by giving him his own way, and very often this queer kind of punishment answered remarkably well.

One summer, when John was spending his vacation in Stamford, the paper announced that a "splendid circus" would make its appearance the very next day. With wide open eyes, and wider open mouth, John read the announcement,—how the "transcendent" and "resplendent" cavalcade would be headed by a "magnificent band-chariot,"

drawn by ten "rampant steeds," some of them beautifully marked,—and the American-Indians [here John gave a spring up in the air and a shout, which frightened his mother]—the Indians would follow upon their Mustang ponies,—John read it "Mustard ponies,"—and a great deal more, stuffed full of such words as, "delicious, enchanting, ravishing, harmony, picturesque, Indian Chiefs, Braves," etc. etc.

Our young friend was turned quite topsy-turvy with all this grand description. He rushed to his father, and broke out with—"Oh, papa, here's to be a circus with *spottier* horses, funnier clowns, wonderf*uller* Indians, and super*iorer* somer*setters* than I ever heard of in the whole course of my existence, and I want to go to it; won't you take me,—please?"

"Yes, if it is a pleasant day," said his father so quickly that John gave a wild whoop of delight, and retired into a corner to stand upon his head

and gaze admiringly at his father, with the blood rushing into his face.

Of course the circus ran in his mind the whole of the next day, to the manifest injury of all the chairs and tables, which he threw down in trying to leap over them. At the first sound of the music he climbed up into a tree at the gate, so as to have the best possible view of the procession, and opened his eyes so very wide that a near-sighted old gentleman riding past thought he was a great brown owl, with a white face, broad awake in the daytime.

First, came the band-chariot drawn by ten horses. "Oh, how funny! Just look at the patchwork horses!" cried John. And, sure enough, they looked exactly like it, with their coats all sorts of colours. I believe such horses are painted, and I wonder they don't sometimes give us pea-green and sky-blue horses, just by way of variety.

The drum was beaten nearly to pieces, and the

brass horns brayed out of tune, enough to take your ears off; and all the little birds on the trees were actually dumb during several minutes, they were so surprised at the horrible noise which the circus-people called "music."

Then came a wild Indian on such a prancing horse that he seemed ready to go off like a squib at the slightest touch of the whip; as it was, he kept up a fizzing and foaming which was quite astonishing.

Then followed a squaw, or wife of an Indian, dressed and painted like a tulip, with a red sash fluttering behind her, and after her more Indians, regular fire-eaters, who looked as if they would have tomahawked their own grandfathers for ten-pence; then another chariot with patchwork horses; and last of all an Indian, making terrible faces at the people, with a perfect cataract of feathers on his head, which fell down his back like a variegated feather rainbow.

All this was perfectly enchanting to John, who nearly tumbled out of the tree, letting go to clap his hands, and screaming hurrah! till he was as hoarse as a crow, and could have growled out in the Kickapoo language as well as the best of them.

"Now came still evening on," and John, who hadn't stood on more than one leg for two hours, began to insinuate that it was high time to start; and his father, remembering that he had once been a boy himself, was hurrying through his tea, and bringing the tears into his eyes by scalding his throat, when all of a sudden a distant muttering seemed to come from the hills; then a growl sounded from a white cloud rising swiftly up; the swallows took to dashing around in a tremendous flurry, and a flash of lightning made everybody start.

"There is a thunderstorm coming on," said John's father; "I think we had better give up the circus for to-night."

"Oh dear, no," cried Master John. "It's nothing but a wind-squall. I remember a hundred such, and they turned out nothing but blowers."

"Look here, youngster, what may be your age, pray?"

"Eight, sir."

"Hem! Eight! that's just twelve thunderstorms and a fraction that you've seen every year of your life that were only 'blowers,' besides those that were *wetters.* I wish *I* could remember so many."

John blushed to the tips of his ears, and turned a somerset over the arm of the sofa to hide his confusion at being caught in a fib; then he ran to the window, and staring fixedly at the clouds, and wishing he could roll them up like a blanket and lock them in a big trunk, said, "But I'm sure, papa, it won't rain this time, and it's such a splendid chance"—

"Of a ducking!" said his father.

"Oh dear, no, sir! I'm certain it's not going to rain. It's very *dry*-sounding thunder."

"Oh, very well; we'll go.—*I* think it will rain very hard; but we'll soon find out which knows most--father or son."

At this John gave one bound in the air, screaming, "Oh, I'm so happy! I could jump over the house for joy."

He snatched up his hat and started at such a prodigious pace that you would have taken him for the Irish giant cut down; and his father, in his hurry to join him, *forgot to take his umbrella.* Perhaps he forgot it *on purpose.*

They arrived at the big tent, where the performances were to take place, just as a large drop of rain came plashing down from the clouds on the end of John's nose. He hurried in, lest his father should even then turn back; and, after paying for admission, they found themselves seated on a rough

wooden bench, with the brass band braying and bellowing close at their ears.

Then a curtain was lifted at one end, and a gorgeous procession of knights and ladies entered on the patchwork horses. John wished he had three pair of eyes to see it all. He clapped his hands, and kept springing off his seat every minute, —while the ladies and gentlemen bowed in the politest manner to the company, and the patchwork horses trotted in time to the music.

But, hark! what was that? Above the din of the horns a crash of thunder was heard, followed instantly by lightning so sharp and blinding that for an instant it almost put out the flaring lamps in the tent.

Suddenly a rushing, roaring sound was heard; a blast of wind struck against one side of the tent with such force that it swayed wildly in, and the people half rose from their seats with a frightened air.

And now the rain came down with fury. It sounded like javelins stabbing at the canvas of the tent overhead. The wind tore in at the sides, and some of the lights were extinguished. The great pole in the centre swayed and staggered like the mast of a ship in a hurricane; the thunder kept up an incessant growling, the lightning flashed every instant, and the spectators, now thoroughly frightened, were standing up wondering what they had better do.

The next moment the clown hurried in, and, making such a low bow that the red spots down his back were plainly seen, attempted to speak; but the roaring of the tempest prevented anyone from hearing a single word, and the tent began to creak and sway in such a fearful manner that some of the women commenced screaming.

John, by this time, was in the highest state of excitement. The little scamp half enjoyed all this hullabaloo as long as he was dry.

All of a sudden a great piece of the canvas of the tent was torn down like a ribbon; the rain poured through like a shower-bath, sending all the people rushing away,—some diving, doubling, and tumbling up against each other, while others went hurry-skurry out into the storm.

The most terrible tumult now ensued. The horses reared and pranced, and the noble knights and ladies riding them were in a dismal plight, with the paint all in streaks on their faces.

What's that? With a crack like a thousand rifles going off at once, the entire top of the tent blew up in the air; then the pole broke short off, and the whole came down in an awful tangle of sail-cloth, ropes, splinters, lamps, and flags! completely covering the terrified knights, ladies, patch-work horses, and company, like an extinguisher.

Such a scuffling and scrambling as there was now! falling over each other, sprawling about, crawling under the benches and scrambling out,

and the uproar of the shrieks and cries was heard above the tempest,—and now—*now* Master John was frightened out of his wits.

"Oh, papa!" he screamed, "take me out! take me out! Don't let me stay in this dreadful place!"

Out they got at last, into the howl and roar and pitchy darkness of the night, for the storm had in nowise abated.

They commenced to walk in that black void, the rain in a few moments drenching them to the skin. Every moment they would tumble up against a tree or a fence, for they could not see half-an-inch beyond their noses; and if it had not been for the flashes of lightning which helped them to get out of the corners and tight places, it is most likely they would have wandered about all night.

Home at last! with the water streaming from their clothes in every direction, and some salt-water with it, for by this time John was sniffing

at a great rate, with big tears rolling down his cheeks.

His mother had been worried to death about him, and she very nearly rubbed the skin off to get him quite dry, so that he looked like a boiled lobster. Then she made him drink a large tumbler-full of lemonade, so hot that it caused him to stand on one leg and squint fearfully. Then, after he had said his prayers, she tucked him up in bed with so many blankets that he was sure he was stewing, and thought he could hear himself frizzling. His father was served the same way, and this prevented them from taking cold after such a terrible soaking.

The next day not a word was said about the circus, though John had been terribly afraid to come down to breakfast,—he was so sure of receiving a long lecture with his bread and butter; but from that day to this, whenever he insists upon knowing better than his parents, his father quietly

asks, "John, are we going to have any more *dry*-sounding thunder?" and the young gentleman immediately walks off, feeling uncommonly flat.

And now, good people, which one do *you* think should know best?—father or son?

"Oh, Frank!" cried Theodore, his eyes sparkling with pleasure, "this is splendid!"

"What is?" asked Frank, pretending not to understand.

"Why, this story. I know it was written by the doctor! It is his handwriting! It is *so* kind in him! But *you* know all about it,—don't you? Now, Frank, you do!" he continued, holding his friend fast. "You told John to do it! Yes, you did!—didn't you?"

Frank laughed, and tried to turn it off, but Theodore pressed him so hard that he confessed the whole plan. He informed his mamma afterwards that his friend's intense delight in the pro-

spect of such a treat was worth a whole bushel of stories. Theodore could not jump up in the air, but he gave such a glorious hurrah! and scared his white dove nearly into fits.

CHAPTER VII.

LITTLE MAY.

THAT same evening, while Frank was at home learning his lessons, his mamma, papa, Larry, and little May, went to see Theodore.

The little fellow had just fallen asleep, and they would not for worlds have disturbed him,—but his mother told them of Frank's kind plan, and the delight her boy felt at the prospect of getting several *real true* stories from his own schoolmates. "His father," she continued, "brought him a beautiful aquarium from New York this evening, but I really believe the cat took more interest in the little fishes swimming round than he did,—he was so full of the new stories and his carrier-dove."

Little May leaned over her mother's lap and listened eagerly to every word that was said; and Larry, who had made a horse of his papa's knee, quite forgot to make believe whip his horse up, he was so interested in hearing the news.

As they were returning home, May said, with a deep sigh, "Oh, dear! I wish I could write a story for Theodore!"

"That's very kind of you, darling, and I will see if I can help you," said her mamma.

So May had a loving little talk with her dear mother, as she was undressing to go to bed. Another surprise was settled upon for Theodore, which made May dance round the room for joy, in her little white night-gown, at such a rate that she tumbled down three times. Then something still more delightful happened; for, after the dear little thing had said her prayers, her mamma "made a baby of her,"—that is, she folded May lovingly in her arms and rocked her, while she repeated what the

little one called her "darling verses." The pretty little witch had heard them at least fifty times,—but that did not make a bit of difference; they were always as good as new.

These are the verses :—*

"As I walked over the hills one day,
I listened and heard a mother-sheep say,—
'In all the green world there is nothing so sweet
As my little lam*mie*, with his nimble feet;
With his eye so bright,
And his wool so white;
Oh, he is my darling, my heart's delight!'
Then the mother-sheep and her little one,
Side by side, lay down in the sun;
They went to sleep on the hillside warm,
But *my* little lammie lies here on my arm."

Here May's mamma gave her a soft, tight squeeze and two or three loving kisses. Then she went on :—

* Mrs. Carter.

" I went to the kitchen, and what did I see
But the old gray cat with her kittens three !
I heard her whispering soft; said she,—
' My kittens with tails so prettily curled,
Are the prettiest things in all the wide world.
The bird on the tree,
And the old sheep, she,
May love their babies exceedingly;
But I love my kittens,
With their little mittens.
I love my kittens with all my might,
I love them at morning, and noon, and night.
Now I'll take up my kitties, the kitties I love,
And we'll lie down together beneath the warm stove.'
Let the kitties sleep under the stove so warm,
While *my* little kittie lies here on my arm."

Here May's mamma gave *her* kitty another squeeze and three kisses. Then she went on :—

" I went to the yard, and I saw the old hen
Go clucking about with her chickens ten.
She clucked, and she scratched, and she bristled away,
And what *do* you think I heard the hen say ?

I heard her remark,—'The sun never did shine
On anything like to these chickens of mine!
You may hunt the full-moon, and the stars if you please,
But you never will find ten such chickens as these.
My dear downy darlings! my sweet little things!
Come, nestle now cosily under my wings.'
So the hen said,
And the chickens all sped
As fast as they could to their nice feather-bed.
And there let them sleep in their feathers so warm,
While *my* little chick lies here on my arm."

Here May's mamma gave *her* chick one last loving squeeze and six kisses, and laid her down in her pretty little white bed.

Soon the blue eyes were closed in sleep, and the dancing golden curls lay quiet on the small snowy pillow. The stars peeped out of the quiet sky, and the long slant beams of the harvest-moon came trembling into the room and rested soft upon the bed.

Then little May dreamed. She dreamed that two radiant white angels came floating through the

open window. They approached, and she felt soft warm kisses on her face. Then they folded their hands, and in low sweet tones prayed that God would bless little May and make her a comfort and happiness to her parents. "*Be* good and *do* good, little May, and God will love you!" were their last words, as they seemed to fly upwards on the moon-beams into the starry heavens.

With the first blush of the morning the child awoke. The memory of her beautiful dream came back to her as she lay listening to the little birds singing their matin hymns. A golden gleam of sunlight broke into the room, the sweet dewy breath of the flowers gave her a good morning kiss, and all the leaves thrilled and sparkled in the summer wind.

In a little while the kind old nurse came into the room to wash and dress little May. She could put on her own stockings and boots, but nurse fastened her clothes and smoothed out her bright

curls. Of course she was told of the lovely dream; and old nurse said, when she had heard it, that she was sure the guardian angels came every night and watched over her lamb, and last night they spoke to her.

Then May skipped down-stairs and had a run out in the fresh air before the rest had come down. She went dancing among the flowers like a merry little elf,—she felt so joyous and happy; the bees flew murmuring past her, and the birds darted around her, and alighted to pick up seeds almost at her feet, for they had no fear of the gentle, pretty little thing.

But the moment she saw her mother, she ran in to tell her of her wonderful dream.

"*Be* good and *do* good!" repeated her mamma. "Yes, my little May, though only six years old, can do good. Perhaps she has already tried?"

"Why, mamma, how can such a little bit of a girl as I do anything?"

"You intend to-day to do something which you think will give poor Theodore pleasure; this is doing good. If you had not wanted to be a good little child, you would not have had the beautiful dream, for our dreams are almost always like our waking thoughts. Shall I tell you of another dream a little girl had?"

"Ah, yes! do, dear mamma,"—and May was in her mother's lap in a moment, while Larry and Frank gathered round to listen as she began,—

"It was told me by Virginia's mamma, but afterwards I read it in a number of the *Children's Magazine.* Virginia went to an excellent school where they adopted the sensible plan of letting the children choose their own subject for composition. The little girl was just beginning to write them, and one day she handed her teacher this:—

"'My Dear Teacher,—

"'As I could not think on any subject on which

to fix my thoughts, I determined to relate to you a beautiful dream I had the other night.

"'I dreamed I was on the top of a high mountain, and I saw the moon, and it was so bright that I thought it was the sun. All at once it opened, and Jesus stood in the midst. The moon came slowly down, until at last it touched the earth, and I ran and kissed Jesus.

"'Your affectionate pupil,

"'VIRGINIA.'

"The teacher was very much pleased with this composition. She called the little girl to her, and said,—

"'It was a very beautiful dream. And how did the blessed Saviour look, as you gazed on Him in your dream?'

"'Oh, I cannot describe Him!' was her reply. 'He was so bright and beautiful, and looked so very kind.'

"And did you feel no fear in your dream, as you looked upon Him?' asked the teacher.

"'Oh no! none at all!' she simply answered. '*I wanted to run right up to Him and kiss Him; and so I did.*'

"Think of the loving trust of this dear child in her Saviour. Think how much she desired to be one of His little lambs. If she had not been sure of His love, she would have been frightened in her dream, and instead of running up at once to kiss Him, just as she would her earthly father, she would have screamed out in her sleep, and tried to hide herself from Him.

"Oh, darling children! try in this world to love, serve, and obey Jesus, our Blessed Saviour, and when you come to die, you will feel like sweet little Virginia, and run joyfully into his arms, safe for ever from all the sorrows of this most sorrowful world,—sorrowful because so full of sin.

"In another number of the *Children's Maga-*

zine some loving friend, whose initials are 'S. R.,' tells us that the dear little girl died soon after having her beautiful dream, and speaks of the calmness and joy of the child at the prospect of going to live with Jesus; and after her death this friend wrote some beautiful verses, beginning —'Sleep, little loved one, sleep.'"

"Oh, mamma," cried May, "I want to hear the verses,—please tell them! I love that darling Virginia."

"I want to hear them too," said Larry.

"So do I," said Frank.

"I cannot remember them well enough to repeat," answered their mamma, "but I will send for the Magazine, and May shall learn these beautiful lines; would you like that, darling?"

"Oh, yes, yes, mamma,—and oh, I want to go and live with Jesus too! Can't we all go to-day, mamma?"

"We do live with Him, darling, when we strive

to serve and love Him. His Holy Spirit is always with us; but we shall not see Him as He is—'the fairest among ten thousand and altogether lovely'—until this life is ended. You will understand this better the older you grow, my little May, and you must try to love him more and more every day."

Just then the silvery tinkle of a small bell announced that breakfast was ready; and this happy little family sat down to enjoy the delicious fruit, fresh eggs, snow-white bread, milk, and fragrant coffee. It was May's week to say grace. Oh, how lovely the sweet little face looked, crowned with its golden curls, lifted up so reverently, as with folded hands she prayed that "God would bless the food to their use, and make them grateful for all His goodness, for Jesus' sake." I wish every family would adopt this custom of saying grace in turn. It would invest this simple prayer with an earnestness and sincerity which, I am grieved to say, are very rarely felt.

After breakfast the servants were called in, a few verses of the Bible were read, and a short prayer made, and the family dispersed to their daily occupations; Frank and Lawrence—or Larry, as every one called him—to school, and little May to learn the short, simple lesson she said to her dear mamma every morning.

After the lesson was finished this morning, May put on her pretty round hat and tripped off with a mysterious parcel carefully tied with a bit of blue ribbon.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE UNEXPECTED GIFT.

THIS same summer morning, Theodore was sitting at the open window watching the ripples of the river, golden in the sunlight, wondering what the next story would be about from his schoolmates, and ever and anon breaking out into singing, he felt so blithe and happy, spite of the crutches which rested by his chair, and which told a sorrowful tale of what he had suffered.

Presently a little white figure came flitting over the velvety green lawn, with such graceful, joyous skips, that, if all the fairies had not flown away to dreamland long ago, you surely would have taken her for one.

As she approached the house, Theodore half rose from his chair, exclaiming,—"Why, I do believe that sweet little May is coming all by herself to see me! How kind!"

He caught up his crutches and hobbled as fast as he could to the door. He was still very weak, and could not walk very well with his wooden legs; but he got out of the room, and was resting at the head of the stairs as the little maiden entered the front door, her golden curls dancing over her cheeks, and her blue eyes sparkling, as she ran up to him, saying, "Oh, dear Theodore, we are all so sorry for you that you have to stay in your room the whole time,—just as sorry as ever we can be! Everybody in your school is sorry too. Rover is sorry, and Dash, and the ponies, and the rabbits, and—everybody." Here May drew a long breath, and then said, "Oh my!" because there was such a heap of sorry people all in a bunch that it quite distressed her.

Theodore stooped down and kissed her rosy cheek, and said,—"Everybody is so kind, May; and I shall soon be well. But do you know what Frank has got all the fellows in school to promise to do? Such a jolly thing! I am to have ever so many stories,—true, too, all about their own cutting up didos!*—that's the very best of it! I've had one already, and I hope another will come this afternoon."

"Well, they are such big boys, and they can write," said May, with a little soft sigh; "but I can't write yet: not well enough, you know,—I can only print a few of the letters,—oh, dear me! But, never mind! I have brought you a sweet little printed letter which mamma got at the Tract Society in New York." She took the envelope out of her basket and handed it to him. "I know you will like it," she continued, "and I give it to

* By "didos," Theodore meant all manner of funny capers.

you to keep. Good-bye, Theodore. I hope your leg will get quite well very soon. Mamma said I must come straight back. Good-bye."

"Oh, thank you, May,—how kind you are!" cried the delighted boy, kissing her. "Do wait one little moment,—I want to tell mamma."

So Theodore's mamma was called to thank and kiss May too, and then she put into a pretty little basket for her six tiny ginger-snaps, and Theodore gave her a great orange; and away she hied, skipping and dancing, Theodore watching her with affectionate eyes till she disappeared in a bend of the path.

Down the happy boy sat in his large arm-chair by the pleasant window, and opening the envelope, he saw this title on the outside of the printed paper,—

"LITTLE LIZZIE'S LETTER TO A SOLDIER."

My darling little readers, let us stop a moment

in our story while I tell you about this letter. It was written by a dear little girl, and sent, with a Testament, to "some wounded soldier" in the hospital at Nashville;"* and it was given by one of the good soldiers of Christ, who are members of the United States Christian Commission,† to the first soldier he saw in the Convalescent Ward in Hospital Number Eight.

And oh, what a blessing followed the gift of this ministering child! Not many days after, this very soldier rose at a religious meeting, trembling and tearful, to request that a prayer might be offered up to God for his salvation. He was a brave man; he had fought for his beloved country, and had lost blood in her defence; but *now* he wanted to be a soldier of Christ, and God, who is far more

* A city in Tennessee.

† The Christian Commission was a band of good men, who devoted themselves to doing good to the wounded soldiers.

ready to bestow than we are to ask, melted and changed his heart when that solemn prayer was made for which he had asked.

And now, for the rest of his life, side by side with the flag of his country—yes, before it—will wave the banner of heaven. Strong in faith and prayer, that brave soldier will belong for ever to the victorious army of which Jesus is the Great Captain.

Ah, my darlings! see how much a little bit of a child can do!—for Lizzie was only seven years old. Would it not be a lovely thing, while this awful war lasts,* for every little girl to make, as well as she could, one of those useful articles called "housewives," and fill it as full as it would hold of pins, needles, thread, buttons, etc. (for you know the poor fellows have to do their own sewing), and then for each one *to write a kind little letter*, such

* When this was written the terrible war in the United States between North and South was raging.

as this dear Lizzie wrote, and before she sent it away, to kneel down with it in her hand and pray that God would send His blessing with her letter, and make the soldier who gets it *His* soldier. Oh, think how much good you might do in this way! And if God should so order it, that this great British nation is ever involved in a dreadful war again, every little girl might have it in her power to make some poor soldier a better man and a good Christian by doing as little Lizzie did. And now we will go back to the precious little letter.

LITTLE LIZZIE'S LETTER.

"Philadelphia, April 17, 1863.

"My Dear Soldier,—

"I send you a little Testament. I am a little girl seven years old. I want to do something for the soldiers who do so much for us, so I have

saved my pocket-money to send you this. Although I have never seen you, I intend to begin to pray that God will make and keep you good. Oh, how sorry I am that you have to leave your dear mother. Did she cry when you bade her good-bye? Don't you often think of her at night when you are going to bed? Do you kneel down and say your prayers? If I were you, I would not care if the other soldiers did laugh: God will smile upon you. I am sorry, very sorry, that you are sick. I wish that I could go to nurse you. I could bathe your head, and read to you. Do you know the hymn—

"'There is a happy land?'

I hope you will go to that land when you die. But remember, I will pray that you may get well again.

"When you are able to sit up, I wish you to write to me, and tell me all your troubles.

"Enclosed you will find a postage-stamp. I live at No. — North Ninth Street.

"Good-bye.

"Your Friend,

"LIZZIE S——."

Theodore read this sweet little letter with the tears swelling in his eyes. At the end were some written words. They were made by May, and were all printed in capitals; for the little darling, as she had said, could not write any other way, and she wanted so much to tell Theodore what she thought about Lizzie.

This is just what she wrote, spelling and all:—

"WAS NOT LIZZIE GOOD? I LUV HER; AND THE SOLGER LUVD HER TUE; FOR HE PRADE TO GOD TO MAK HIM GOOD LIKE LIZZIE, AND ROTE HER A LETTER TUE. IS IT NOT A NISE LETTER?"

"Nashville, Tenn., May 24, 1863.

"DEAR LITTLE LIZZIE,—

"I received your kind letter and the Testament from Mr. C. I. M. A beautiful present indeed, and I trust it will be one of the means of converting others as well as it has converted me. May God bless you, little Lizzie. You have done a good work. Continue to pray, dear little girl, and God will answer you. He says so in his Word.

"My dear mother is in the grave. It is nearly eleven years since she died; but she died happy, and I trust I shall meet her in heaven. I will try and pray for myself. I have been in the hospital four months, but am now nearly well, and shall soon be able to join my regiment to face the enemy. If I should fall on the battlefield, may I have the blessed assurance of meeting my Saviour in peace.

"Yes, 'there is a happy land.' May we meet in

that happy land. I do not think that my fellow-soldiers will deter me from serving my Master. There are many others here with whom his Spirit is striving.

"I expect to go home to see my dear friends once more. I am very thankful that the privilege is granted, and I trust we shall have a happy meeting. Dear Lizzie, I must close. May God bless you is my prayer. Write me again.

"Address your friend,

"S—— L—— N——,

"Fourth Michigan Cavalry, Nashville, Tenn."

Theodore had read these letters aloud to his mamma, who sat near him with her sewing. A strange choking rose in his throat as he finished. He looked round the richly furnished room, and out on the sunny lawn, and then at his loving mother, who seemed only to live to make him well and happy.

At last he spoke in a low, tearful tone,—"Oh, mamma! if I, who have such comforts, and you, darling mamma, above all, to love and care for me when I am ill or hurt,—if I suffer so much, what must the poor soldiers do, wounded, bleeding, and perhaps burning with fever or freezing with chills? Oh, mamma! pray forgive me for being so cross and impatient. Lizzie's soldier's mother was dead," —and he burst into tears, sobbing out,—"What can I do for a poor sick or wounded soldier, mamma?—tell me, what can I do?"

His mother hastened to him, and put his head upon her loving breast, and kissing him, said, "Don't cry, my darling;"—she was crying too;—"we must try to do more than ever for the brave men who are risking life and limb in our defence. You know we have made many hundred thousand dollars at the great Fairs about the country for the benefit of the poor fellows, and all good, noble-hearted women have signed a pledge to save in

dress and every other expense, to enable them to help the soldiers still more. Not in the way of charity, as if they were beggars,—oh, NO! we *owe* it to them.

"I'll tell you what you can do, Theodore. The poor fellows are thankful for anything in the shape of reading. If you choose to make the sacrifice, you may send as many of your books as you like to some poor fellow who has fallen wounded in one of these last dreadful battles."

"Oh, mamma, thank you!" cried Theodore, his eyes brightening. "When may I send them? To-day?"

"You can select them to-day," answered his mother, "and I will have them packed and sent to-morrow."

"Oh, how enchanting! That darling 'Nicholas Nickleby!' he must go; and all my 'Nightcap' books, and 'Oliver Twist,' and my big 'Robinson Crusoe,' with the splendid pictures,—he'll be delighted with that, *I* know; and 'The Life of Alex-

ander the Great.' I know that almost by heart. Yes! I'll give that poor lonely fellow all my *best* books,—and oh, mamma! couldn't I send him the jolly stories the boys are writing for me,—couldn't I?"

His mother laughed, and said there was no telling but that the famous stories and Theodore too might be put in a printed book some day; and if they were, he could send the book to a sick soldier.

This astonished Theodore very much, though he said John Brown's story was good enough to put in *any* book, and he dared say the others would be good too;—he said "jolly" good; but I don't like to have these slang words in my books, though the boys use them all the time.

"Why, mamma!" exclaimed the generous little fellow, "if my private particular stories were printed, all the world and everybody else might have them to read. I *do* wish they could!"

All the rest of that day Theodore was very busy. He called up old Archie the gardener, who brought him every book he possessed. He loved every one of them; *but those he loved best* were the ones he selected for the soldier, whom he was already beginning to love too, as if he knew him,—so true it is that a kind action done to another causes you to feel a warm interest and affection for that other. Try it, my darlings, and let me know if I have not told you the truth.

The next morning a large package, done up in strong brown paper, was placed in the hall. It was labelled*—"To the United States Christiam Commission. Books. From a boy suffering from a broken leg, to some brave wounded soldier. He sends his love with the books, and hearty wishes that the soldier will soon be well and strong."

* The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, brother of the lady who wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was an officer of this Society.

Theodore's father took it away to New York with him, and before many hours it was in the hands of the Commission. May God bless the good men engaged in this work, and strengthen their hands more and more.

Theodore was not satisfied with this. He was anxious to do more for the soldiers;—and his mother, who was always working in the same good cause, at last thought of setting him to work to make crochetted reins for little children, with gay-coloured worsteds.

Such laughter and blushing as there was over the "girls' work." Theodore's fingers at first seemed to be all thumbs. He could not "get the hang of it," he said. The work was a succession of great loose loops and hard knots! it *would* get twice as wide again in one place as another, and certainly it was the most ridiculous attempt at reins that ever was seen.

But "practice makes perfect;" and even Theo-

dore learned to crochet beautifully in time. Every plain pair of his reins brought a dollar* a set; while those which had "Union" worked on them were sold for about a dollar and a half,—at which he was very proud and happy,—and every penny of the money went to that blessed Christian Commission.

* About four shillings English money.

CHAPTER IX.

NED CHICKERING'S STORY.*

THE day after Theodore sent his books away, Frank rushed into his room at the same moment that the white dove flew into the window with a letter tied under his wing.

Not an instant was lost in taking it from this delightful postman; and Theodore would gladly have paid him with a dozen plum-cakes, he was so grateful and happy.

With hurried eagerness the envelope was torn off. This time, unlike John Brown's story, there was a signature.

* Ned Chickering is a great friend of Aunt Fanny's.

"From Ned Chickering!" shouted Theodore. "Dear old fellow! Frank, do turn a somerset for me; I can only sit here and shake my shoulders for joy, when I want to jump over the house!"

Frank turned one somerset for Theo and another for himself, his eyes dancing with glee; then he ran and sat on the arm of the big chair, and leaning over his friend, they both read together:—

"How are you, old fellow? Frank says, as you can't cut up capers yourself, it will comfort you to read about other people's; so here goes for number one.

"Two or three years ago, sister Sue, our cousin Ben Chickering, and I, got hold of a book all about Indians, with the most stunning accounts of the splendid way they lived in the woods, and all about it.

"We were then living in Pittsfield, in Massachusetts, and had many a nice picnic in the woods,

and long walks about the grand old hills which surround the town.

"Sister Sue was always up to all kinds of mischief: so when we had finished reading, it was just like her to cry out,—'I do declare! let's go off into the woods and play we were Indians! We can build a wigwam, and you can carry your bows and arrows to shoot deer, and I'll tie up my broken-nosed doll—the one Ben calls Miss Almira Tipseytoes—in a lot of rags, and fasten her to the stave of a barrel: she'll make an elegant pappoose.'*

"'But who'll be the squaw?'

"'Oh, I'll be the squaw,' said Sue; 'and if we come to any rivers in our travels, I can strap the pappoose on my back and swim across,—or, perhaps, you can make a birch-bark canoe. It's no matter if you can't, because the Indian women swim like mermaids, you know.'

* "Pappoose" is the Indian word for "baby."

"'But we haven't got any Indian dresses,' said Ben.

"'Yes, you have; or you can make them. I've a pair of mocassins to begin with, and some feathers Ned pulled out of the turkey's tail,—they will make splendid head-dresses,—and, oh, it will be enchanting!'

"'Yes,' cried I, getting excited about it. 'There is an old red flannel petticoat in a corner of the garret; we'll tear that into strips, and pin them all over our clothes. And we must paint our faces.'

"'How?—where can we get the paint?' asked Sue.

"'*I* know,' cried Ben, eagerly; let's pound up a red brick and mix it with water; that makes splendid paint!'

"No sooner said than done. Half-an-hour after we had eaten our dinners, poor old Aunt Peg's red petticoat was seen flourishing in long

strips on the outside of our clothes, with a turkey-feather pinned here and there,—and going behind the barn we pounded the brick with a stone, mixed it in an old tin kettle, and ornamented ourselves with red patches all over our faces, hands, and necks; then we collected our bows and arrows, caught up Miss Almira Tipseytoes, who had an expression of countenance as if she was sure something awful was going to be done to her, and set off in great glee to find a savage solitude in which to build our wigwam.

"We hunted all round the town, and at last concluded to squat* in Deacon Taylor's woods. Such jolly woods as they were!—the birds trilled their merry notes all day long; the squirrels leaped from bough to bough; the fir-trees smelt so sweet; and the only disagreeable thing was a horrid old

* When emigrants come to the United States, and build a hut on land belonging to somebody else, they call it "squatting."

squint-eyed owl, who glared at us from a hole in the trunk of an oak,—but we made awful faces back at him, and I hope he was satisfied.

"The first thing we did was to set Miss Almira Tipseytoes against a tree, and dance a war-dance all around her, further enlivened by war-whoops; and when we were almost breathless with laughing and dancing, we commenced to build the wigwam.

"It was quite a scientific affair, I can tell you! made of branches and big leaves and bark,—with a door to creep in, and a hole in the top for the smoke to curl out of, and everything as comfortable as hot toast.

"'Oh, how enchanting!' cried Sue, as we sat down inside. Let's have Indian names. I'll be be Pocahontas.'

"'My name is Ga-ghee-ga-ga-boo,' said I. 'Mamma knew an Indian chief of that name; it means all sorts of splendid things.'

"'And I'm Pontoosuc,' cried Ben. 'The lake

up here is named after me. It means 'a run for deer.'

"'Oh, dear!' we all cried; 'we almost forgot them. Let's go out and shoot some this minute.'

"But unfortunately Deacon Taylor's woods didn't seem to have any deer in them; but as Ben and I were determined not to be baulked of our game, we commenced a vigorous hunt after half-a-dozen of the Deacon's calves, which were peacefully cropping the grass in the next field; Sue promising to keep house, or rather to keep wigwam, and busy herself in strapping up the unfortunate Miss Almira Tipseytoes into a pappoose of the first quality.

"And now began a most magnificent hunt! I concentrated all my energies into trying to shoot a jolly fat little calf, sounding a charge with such a tremendous whoop, that the clumsy thing upset itself in its fright, and lay for a minute with all four legs in the air, ba-aing, or whatever a calf does, at a most awful rate. I let fly at him, and hit

him in the very middle of his nose, whereupon he bounced up, with his tail high in the air, and tore away like mad.

"But Ben (I mean Pontoosuc) got hold of a little pippin-hearted ragamuffin of a calf, that danced up and down in the same place, and gave him a splendid chance to fire every one of his arrows into him; and the calf danced at such a rate that Pontoosuc expected to see him run out of his hide, like a snake in spring time.

"Presently we had to pick up our arrows; then we charged on all six of our comical deer,—tearing round after them, laughing and whooping; the calves, now perfectly wild and savage, kicking and bellowing with all their might and main; and oh, my goodness, what fun it was!

"By this time we began to feel hungry; so Pontoosuc and I concluded to hunt no more that day, and we arrived at the wigwam, chuckling and giggling over the grand time we had had.

"'Well,' said Pocahontas, 'did you kill any deer? It ought to be hanging over your shoulders?'

"'Ga-ghee-ga-ga-boo made his dance the rigadoon, and mine turned somersets. We expect to finish them to-morrow,' answered Pontoosuc.

"'We ought to smoke the pipe of peace now,' said Pocahontas, who seemed to know everything.

"'And then have supper,' said I, 'for I'm nearly starved.'

"So one and all pretended to have a delightful smoke out of short twigs bent up at one end, to represent the pipes; and then taking off our red flannel and turkey-feathers, and leaving Miss Almira Tipseytoes tied by her neck to a branch to her grief, we ran home, and washing off the red paint, enjoyed our suppers, and went to bed like decent Christians.

"The next afternoon we were wild and savage Indians again. But before we got to Deacon Taylor's woods, Sue all at once gave a jump and

exclaimed,—'Oh, do look at that nest of lovely little mice!'

"Sure enough, so it was! Down I got on my knees to see it better; while Ben, who is very nice and fastidious in his ways, put his arm round Sue's waist and tried to pull her away. He couldn't bear mice; but Sue insisted on taking them to the wigwam, to amuse Miss Almira Tipseytoes, she said. So I lifted the nest very carefully and carried it to the woods.

"We dressed ourselves up with the flannel and feathers, and more red paint than ever, and left Pocahontas to look after the pappoose and mice, while we, warriors and chieftains, went hunting.

"The Deacon's calves caught it again in fine style, and were scampering and yelling, when Pontoosuc exclaimed,—'Goodness, Ga-ghee-ga-ga-boo, there's a buffalo!'

"The buffalo was a large black bull that was quietly feeding under a tree in the next field.

"Oh, what a splendid chance for a regular pitched battle! We gathered up our arrows, and walking round till we got behind him, gave him two first-rate shots in the back.

"The old fellow started, gave a low angry bellow, and went on feeding.

"Then taking good aim, I hit him smack on his left ear.

"With a tremendous bellow, his tail went up like a water-spout, his head went down, and he commenced to rush round the field like a wild beast. The hills resounded with his roarings, and if we had not been on the other side of the fence, we should have been most awfully scared.

"But we got it afterwards; for the bull running along the side of the stone fence, found a broken part, and tore through and rushed furiously at us.

"Didn't Pontoosuc and I scamper! We made straight for our wigwam,—screaming to Sue, who came out, looking perfectly astonished.

"'Run for your life!' we cried, 'and climb the first tree you can!'

"She looked back one moment, and then we all raced like the wind,—and Pontoosuc first helping her up a tree, we scrambled after like squirrels, just as the bull rushed past with all the calves tearing behind him, and behind them Deacon Taylor and two of his farm-men with hay-forks.

"As soon as Deacon Taylor caught sight of us perched up in a tree, he exclaimed,—'What! is it you, you little rascals, who have been frightening my calves out of their five wits and ten senses? I picked up an arrow with 'Ben Chickering' marked on it. Just let me catch you! I'll give you all such a thrashing as you never got before in the whole course of your existence! Making scarecrows of yourselves, too! You ought to be ashamed of yourselves!'

"'We a'n't scarecrows, Deacon!' said Pontoosuc, indignantly.

"'They are Indian chiefs,' cried Sue, 'and I'm a squaw, and we live in a wigwam.'

"'I'll squaw and wigwam you,' cried the angry Deacon. He turned round, caught sight of the wigwam and Miss Almira Tipseytoes hanging by the neck, marched up to them, trampled and tore the wigwam down, and, awful to relate! pulled Miss Almira in two, threw her legs one way and her head and body the other. The bran ran out of her body, and in a moment she was collapsed as flat as a pancake, and looked as if she had blue cholera, and her legs had dropped off in the very last stage of the disease. Pocahontas screamed when she beheld her pappoose murdered in this way, and Pontoosuc and I boiled over with rage.

"'Oh, Ga-ghee-ga-ga-boo,' whimpered Pocahontas, rubbing the red paint into her eyes, 'that hateful Deacon Taylor has killed my pap—pap—pappoose.'

"'We'll settle him! never mind, Pocahontas!'

we both cried; and we took off our trappings and went home in a very different mood from the evening before,—as the black boy said when the sexton boxed his ears for laughing in church,—'He laf toder side he mout when he get him ears boxed.' That was just our case.

"The next evening was weekly prayer-meeting. Of course there was an end of playing Indian, but by no means an end of teasing Deacon Taylor.

"Ben and I went to meeting, but we came softly out before it was over, to get Deacon Taylor's horse and waggon ready,—for he also was at the meeting with his family.

"We undid all the harness, every single strap, took the bit out of the horse's mouth, and left the harness lying on his back. It was a dark night, and, of course, when the Deacon came out, he could not tell but that it was all right about his waggon. We crouched behind a tree to see the fun. The family got in,—then the Deacon. 'Get up,' he

said, touching the old nag with his whip, who started, walked straight out of the harness and trotted off, leaving the Deacon sitting in the waggon so perfectly dumbfoundered that he was unable to speak, while we had to cram our pocket-handkerchiefs in our mouths to keep from bursting out with laughter. Oh, what jolly fun it was!

"I don't know whether the Deacon suspected us, as he and his family were trudging home on foot. If he did, he let us alone ever after. And so ends this veracious account of the wonderful Pittsfield Indians, their elegant squaw, and her pappoose, Miss Almira Tipseytoes; who disappear from the scene, as we say in Latin,—

"'With our rorum corum
Sunti vorum,
Harem scarem fido.
Rag tag merry derry, periwig and hatband,
Hic hæc hoc merry wig and dido.'

"Yours ever, NED CHICKERING.

"With compliments of Sue and Ben Chickering."

The boys shouted with laughter over this ridiculous story, and Theodore sent a note of thanks to Ned Chickering, and hoped to hear more of the wild pranks of three such jolly fellows as Sue, Ben, and he were. When Ned got the note, he showed it to his sister and cousin; and Sue said it was the best compliment she had ever received in her life to be called a "jolly fellow!"—which was "just like her," Ben said.

CHAPTER X.

ANNIE'S COMPOSITION.

EVERYBODY seemed to take the greatest interest in Theodore and his misfortune. May had told her little playmates about the carrier-dove, and the next letter he brought was from May's mamma. Here it is.—

"DEAR THEODORE,—

"My little May has a friend who writes very pretty compositions. I have begged her to give me one of them to send to you. She is a little, fair, gentle, sensitive girl, ten years of age. Her mother is dead, but a good loving aunt takes the kindest care of her. I hope you will like it.

"YOUR LOVING FRIEND."

Theodore turned quickly to the composition, which bore this charming title :—

"GOSSIP AMONG FLOWERS.*

"As I was walking in the garden one morning, I heard a pure white rose say,—'There is no flower in the garden like me; all the ladies choose me to adorn their hair.'

"'Nay,' said a sweet-pea, 'you are very pretty, but you are not so fragrant as I am.'

"The lady-rose was highly offended, and drew herself up haughtily and said,—'You are not as large or fragrant as I am.'

"'I am *too*,' insisted the sweet-pea.

"'Friends,' said a sweet little violet hidden down in the grass, 'you are both very pretty, but do not let quarrels turn your beauty into ugliness.'

"She ceased to speak; and the rose said,—

* Written by a dear little girl, ten years old,—the Annie I told you about in the first volume.

'The violet is right, and we are wrong. Come, let us be friends.'

"'Yes,' said the sweet-pea; and they began to talk in the pleasantest manner possible.

"As I walked on, I heard a lily say to a tulip,—'The violet is a little peace-maker.'

"Just then some one called me,—it was my brother;—so I left the sweet flowers and went with him to play. ANNIE."

"Oh, what a dear little composition!" exclaimed Theodore, as he finished. "I wish I knew Annie."

"Write a note and invite her to come and take tea with you," said Frank.

"Oh, no! a boy can't ask a girl. I wish she was my sister. What a lucky fellow you are, Frank, to have that sweet little May for a sister."

"I am *so!*" returned Frank with energy. I tell you what: she's a perfect cat-bird!"

"Cat-bird!" repeated Theodore, opening his eyes; "that's a compliment and a half."

"Of course it is. If I want to show how much I like any one, I *always* say they are perfect cat-birds,—all except mamma and papa. They are perfect pea-green, apple-dumpling darlings: that means much better."

"Oh, what a fellow!" said Theodore laughing. "Well, give my love to your pea-green, apple-dumpling mother, and thank her for her letter and Annie's composition."

CHAPTER XI.

AUNT FANNY'S STORY.

EVERY day the white carrier-dove brought Theodore a story, or account of some funny caper; and many a happy hour did the delighted boy have over them.

But one afternoon a new surprise awaited him. Frank came bounding in, his face perfectly radiant with joy and expectation. The next moment the dove flew through the window, and lighted on the arm of Theodore's chair.

"Why," he exclaimed,—"what a thick letter! It must be a long story! How very enchanting!"

In great haste he tore off the envelope, and read this :—

"DEAR THEODORE,—

"Somehow or other, I hear all about the 'Good Little Hearts' who live this way and that. I know how you saved the family of the poor little wrens, and what you have suffered. I know how nobly you forgave Tom Bennett, and I feel almost certain that your conduct towards him will make him a better boy,—yes, that it will have a good influence over his whole life.

"I amuse myself once in a while by writing for my darlings stories that appear like translations from other languages. It makes a variety, you know. I have just finished a story, in which I have tried to imitate the German style. I send it to you in manuscript by your carrier-dove. You see I know all about Frank's excellent plan ;—you can't keep anything good and lovely from coming

to my ears sooner or later; and what he is doing to relieve the weariness of your confinement in your room is both good and lovely. Three cheers for Frank!

"And now I have a very great favour to ask. It is that you will lend me all the letters you have received, so that I may delight other 'Good Little Hearts' with them. Will you? and oblige your loving AUNT FANNY."

"Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" shouted Theodore, waving the letter in the air like a flag. "Oh, Frank, I wish I could stand on my head for just one moment, I am so glad!"

"I'll do it for you," said Frank, suiting the action to the word. "I wish I had two heads, or could take yours off and put it on my left shoulder; then you could see how jolly you look, taking a view of the world upside-down."

"Thank you," said Theodore, laughing, as Frank

turned over on his feet again. "Your face is as red as a cock's comb. Now come, let's read this darling story. Aunt Fanny is a pea-green, apple-dumpling darling, isn't she?"

"She is *so*," answered Frank, as he took his seat by Theodore, and both were the next moment completely absorbed in the interesting story supposed to be translated from the German, called—

THE LAST BIRTHDAY.

Ah! it is magnificently beautiful in the summer time on the sea-shore. The great laughing waves came tumbling in, leaving semicircles of foam on the sandy beach; the sun, fiery and golden, springs like a warrior from his bath, fresh and eager for the work the day will bring; the water, for miles and miles, seems liquid, living flame, and all the rest blue, sparkling, and lovely. Oh! it is hard to believe how wild, how treacherous, how cruel, the beautiful ocean can become.

Out from one of the cottages of drift-wood that stood at a short distance from the beach, on the German Ocean, came a young girl and boy. They were fishermen's children, and cousins; they had been born on the same day; they had played together from earliest infancy; they loved each other dearly; they had never been separated. But now big tears were gathering in the girl's eyes, and slowly rolling down her cheeks. She held her cousin fast by the hand, for that day he was to leave her,—he was to be a sailor.

He talked fast and merrily of his first voyage, and the wonders he should see in the warm lands far away, where the coffee-tree grows, and all the air is perfumed with spices; but she only wept more bitterly, and, looking at him with piteous, imploring eyes, cried,—

"But I, Franz,—what shall I do? what will become of me when thou art far away over the sea?"

The boy picked a white pebble from the sand.

It was smooth and polished. The sea had beaten upon it for centuries, until it was now worn into the shape of a little heart.

"*Mein liebchen** Annen," he said, with a loving smile, "see, here is my heart to keep while I am away; and when I return from the far distant land, I will bring a pretty paroquet for thee. Don't cry, Annen; come what may, we cannot forget."

"No, we cannot forget," murmured Annen.

"And see, my Annen," he continued, "I shall surely return. When I sat resting by the pure spring far back among the hills yesterday at noon, I became very sorrowful thinking of the parting from my parents and thee; then I fell asleep and dreamed that a beautiful white angel floated down out of heaven and said to me, in tones of sweetest music, 'Be comforted, dear Franz; do all thy duty, and thou shalt come safely back.'"

* My beloved.

"Ah, Franz!" exclaimed Annen, "what a lovely dream! Would that I too could see an angel in my sleep!"

"Perhaps the same one will come to thee to-night, when I am gone, *mein liebchen*," said Franz, —and then the little maiden dried her tears and strove to smile hopefully.

They turned from the bright sparkling sea, and went hand-in-hand toward the cottage, where the mother of Franz was packing his little wooden chest. Ah, then the tears flowed afresh, for the ship was to sail on that very day.

His mother, too, wept sorrowfully on the boy's neck, and his father blessed him. They would have given him a present at parting, but they were too poor; it had taken their best means to make him ready for the voyage.

But they knelt with him and prayed that the dear Jesus would keep away the terrible storms and the cruel, hungry waves, and return their boy

safe home again. Then the father and son got into their boat in silence, and rowed towards the ship as she lay in the harbour.

"Farewell!" cried Annen, and she wept more and more bitterly, for one cannot be consoled on the first day of parting.

That night passed, and many days and weeks. The little Annen hid her grief and worked bravely in her father's cottage, knitting and spinning; and daily she went to see Franz's parents, to talk of the absent one, and pray with them for his safety.

Weeks and months,—yes, two whole years were now ended, and then the good ship came again.

The little heart-shaped stone that had been found on the sea-shore remained the same, but Franz and Annen had become taller, and he was brown and sturdy with sun and work; but they knew each other at once, and on Franz's hand, as he leaped on shore, was the green paroquet he had

promised to bring his dear cousin from the warm lands.

"Thou seest I have not forgotten!" he gaily cried.

"No, we can never forget," said the little maiden; and the parrot, quickly turning its head, said, "*Mein liebchen* Annen," which made her cheeks rosy with delight.

Ah, now was a happy time! Franz had come home on his birthday. It was Annen's also; and tallow-candles were lighted in the cottage, as many as the cousins were years old; while without on the beach the neighbours had kindled a bonfire, according to the old custom, to do honour to the day.

Then the little wooden chest was opened, and one could see in a moment how warm and loving a heart dwelt within the boy's breast, as he handed all his wages to his mother, and a present beside. Oh, yes! *that* was the very best of it, for the pre-

sent was a portrait of himself in his Sunday clothes: one could know that without being told. It was in a neat black frame; and Franz knocked a nail in the wall above the chimney-piece, and Annen hung the picture up; and the bright face always after made sunshine, and moonshine too, in the cottage, were the day or night ever so gloomy or dark without.

"Wilt thou not tell us of thy voyage?" asked Gottfried, who was Franz's uncle and Annen's father.

"That I will," he answered. "The stout captain and his crew were afraid of nothing; and when the great waves shook their angry crests at us, they laughed and said, 'Oh, yes, you may come; we have battened down the hatches, so you will get nothing, that's certain.' One day there was a heavy storm of rain. We had a dog and a pig on board. They were really good friends, and lived a very happy life together, except when

the weather was stormy; then the dog would creep into his kennel, leaving his comrade to wander about, lonely and melancholy, trying to find a shelter; and that was really wrong.

"'I can't bear it any longer,' said the little pig to himself, one dreary rainy day. 'It is not at all like the sunshine, when Tray and I bark and grunt so pleasantly together. Why don't they make a kennel for me? I shall catch my death of cold! It's all very well to talk of my thick hide, but I cannot bear it!'

"'But you must,' said Tray, poking his nose out for an instant. 'You are only a pig, and pigs are not considered genteel, and that is the reason you do not have a house like me. You are so common that it will not do for you to be so conceited. Don't make that grunting; it gives me a headache.'

'The little pig went away with anger in his heart. The rain beat with a sound like a drum on his back, and he wished with all his heart that he

was genteel enough to have a house built for him.

"'I'll have Tray's house! Yes, I'll have it!' he grunted as loud as he could; and curling his tail into a double bow-knot, he ran to the cook's galley. He looked all round for the tin plate out of which Tray and he ate together like brothers. All at once he gave a grunt of satisfaction. Yes, there it certainly was just under the stove, and perfectly empty. That was so stupid! But, never mind! one must always do the best he can; and after all, it was better to be empty, for when the little pig took the plate in his mouth,—crack! it went up against his nose, and, sure enough, if any food had been on it, all would have been spilled, and that would certainly have been a misfortune.

"So the little pig trotted with the empty plate back to Tray's house, and setting it down a little way off, and placing himself between the plate and the house,—he—yes, guess what he did? He

pretended to be eating something delicious out of the plate! 'Hem, hem! grunt, grunt! how nice! really this is better than one could possibly imagine! this is worth not being so particularly genteel!'

"'What *can* it be?' said Tray, putting his nose out of the kennel. 'I can't even smell it. It isn't Sunday, when we have so much to eat that I wish Sunday would come every day. What can it be?' and he slapped his tail impatiently against the floor of his house, and sniffed with all his might.

"'Grunt, grunt!' and the pig kept on pretending to eat, with his ears wide open and his eyes winking faster than ever. The rain poured down, the deck ran with water, but Tray could stand it no longer. 'I *must* have some,' he said; 'my mouth is watering so dreadfully! One can see, if one cannot smell, that there is something delicious by the noise he makes.'

"'He's coming,' thought the little pig; 'grunt, grunt!' and he gobbled furiously.

"'I shall be too late; I shan't get a taste,' cried Tray, rushing round to the other side of the plate, the farthest from his kennel; when, 'squeak!' went the little pig, and with one bound he was inside the kennel, leaving Tray to stare at the empty plate, and howl with rage; and all the rest of the day the rain beat like a drum on poor Tray's back, and gave him the rheumatism, while the little pig slept dry and comfortable, and felt as if he were really growing genteel."

The neighbours laughed at this story; and Annen, laying her hand on Franz's shoulder, said, —"It was thou who talked for Tray and the little pig, and that was the best of it all."

"But they thought it," he answered.

"And what didst thou see in the warm lands?" asked Gottfried.

"Ah! there the sun burns, sure enough! but

the paroquets and monkeys, they seem to like it. Thou must keep thy paroquet by the chimney-piece in the winter-time, *mein liebchen* Annen. Yes, here it is indeed too cold for the pretty bird and the captain's monkeys."

"Tell us of the monkeys, dear Franz," said Annen. "Did they live like a happy family, with the dog and the pig?"

"Ah, no! they even fought with each other;—it was really tiresome!—and so the captain put the great monkey in a large cage by himself, and the little ones together in another. The cages were set side by side, and every day the little monkeys would say, 'Hem, hem!' and knock with a stone on the side of the cage, in hopes that the big one would say, 'Hem, hem!' and knock back. Yes, that would be really fine, but the old monkey sat in a corner and only said, 'Chee, chee!' if any one came near; and then the little monkeys heard him, and that was some consolation.

"But one day the very funniest of the little monkeys seated himself close to the bars, next to the great monkey's cage, and commenced to pound the partition with a stone. Not a sound did he get in reply. 'It is quite clear he is asleep,' he said to himself. Then aloud, 'Hem, hem! Good day! Have you anything good to eat?"

"Nobody answered. 'You're so stupid!' shouted the little monkey; 'at least you can understand that. In here we are right jolly, or whatever you choose to call it. It is true you have a house to yourself; but what is the good of that? We have our families, which make such a delightful chattering on week-days, and twice as much on Sundays; while for you, one day is just like another.' Bang, bang, bang! 'Yes, you are stupid enough, that's sure!'

"And now I rolled an apple towards the cages. The great monkey sprang to get it, but the little one was much too quick for him; he caught it and

took a bite out in an instant. Ah, then one could see that the big monkey was angry! He turned slowly round with a grin of rage; his long tail slipped through the bars, and curled round to where the little monkey was sitting munching his apple.

"Oh! what was that? In an instant the little one had seized the tail, drew it into his own cage, and held it tight with one hand, while he went on eating his apple as if nothing particular had happened.

"'Ai! ee! chee! ee! ee!' screamed the big monkey, dancing up and down. It really seemed as if he would dance his tail off. 'Chee! chee! ee! ee!' he shouted and shrieked, and all the while the naughty little monkey held his tail tight and munched his apple, pretending to believe that the great monkey was sound asleep; and that was really so very funny!"

"And what happened then?" asked the little Annen, laughing merrily.

"Ah! that I lost, for the boatswain's pipe screamed, louder than the big monkey, 'All hands shorten sail, ahoy!' We sprang into the shrouds, and when we came down the old monkey was doubled up in a far corner patting the end of his tail, which seemed to hurt him terribly, while the naughty little monkey was pretending to read a scrap of newspaper."

"Nay, then," laughed Gottfried, "it was too bad thou couldst not have seen the end."

"It is just as one takes it," answered Franz, good-humouredly. "One must become accustomed to being called away from pleasant things in a ship. Yes, and on shore too,—for must I not leave thee, *mein liebchen* Annen, my dear parents, and all of you, before many weeks?"

The little Annen heaved a sigh, as she thought how short the time would seem; and Franz's parents murmured to each other, "Nay, then, is it not altogether too bad that he must go again so

soon?" But the kind neighbours, seeing that they were sad, joined hands and chanted the blithe old song, which perhaps had been sung at the birthday of a Viking's child:—

"The mead foams up
In the golden cup,
And ruddy the flames of the beal-fires arise;
They mirror their glow
In the waves below,—
But brightest the beams of our Annen's eyes.

"May blessings rare
Be our Annen's share,
In sunshine and storm may her heart rejoice;
So runneth the song
Each lip along,—
But clearest of all is our dear Franz's voice.

"The birds in the spring
To their mates will sing,
From the boughs below to the boughs above;
But dearer the bliss
Of a night like this,—
With Annen and Franz to care for and love."

And now for many days the two happy children worked and played together on the sands of the sea. Franz mended his father's nets, gathered the drift-wood for his mother, and brought her many a bucket of water from the cool pure spring far back among the hills: yes, and many a bucket for a poor old woman whose husband and two brave sons were sleeping quietly at the bottom of the ocean. Ah! that was so sad, and Franz pitied her, and the tender look of pity made his face beautiful; but he did not know this, for no one told him; and the poor old woman prayed our Lord to bless him and keep from all harm the kind sailor-boy.

But happy days will not last for ever, and the morning came for Franz to depart. This time he would only be gone a year, and when he returned he would stay a long time; ah, that was a happiness to think of! and Annen smiled through her tears as she took from her neck the small silver

cross that had once been her grandmother's, and placed it in Franz's hands.

"This will keep me in thy memory," she softly said.

"Can I *ever* forget thee?" exclaimed the boy; and he pressed the cross to his lips, and put it in his bosom.

And again many weeks passed away. The blessed Yule-tide came and went. The holy Christmas-eve and blessed Christmas-day were spent by the little Annen half tearfully, half happily,—hoping that Franz was safe, praying that he would return to them ere long. On the dark winter nights, when the fearful storms broke over land and sea, the waves would rush howling on the shore, as though they would sweep away the cottages themselves. Ah! then little Annen would rejoice that Franz was to return in the summer time; but she would pray our Lord to protect all the ships on that wild winter ocean.

Patiently she waited and cheerfully she worked. Many times a day the parrot would say, "*Mein liebchen* Annen!" and that was really a happiness to hear. And at sunset she would wander out on the sands, and look far over the heaving waves towards the southern lands. The black and heavy surge of the water would have filled her with miserable fears, had not our Lord given her a trusting and believing spirit. "Yes," she murmured, "he will surely come safely back." And the great rolling waves said hoarsely, but quite distinctly,—"We will bring him back,—we will bring him back." The mermaids would have sung to her too, but one never sees them nowadays. They stay in their coral caves at the bottom of the sea,—and that is such a pity!

Now it is summer-time again. So the sea-birds told each other as well as they could as they flew; and the little Annen's face grew brighter, and the great waves turned blue and shining as they danced

in the sun. The fishermen's cottages were kept so clean and neat that one knew that somebody certainly was coming,—the very best kind of company too; and that was so delightful!

One evening just at sunset, a little while before Franz was expected, the sky had a strange look; yes, it seemed as if the clouds were having a terrible battle up there, though below there was scarcely any wind. But now it began to rise with a hollow moaning sound, the sun went down red and angry, and the great waves lashed each other, tumbling into surf on the beach.

As the night advanced, the clouds closed in, hiding the moon, which had seemed to plunge headlong, as if she had been frightened and lost her way.

All at once a fearful hurricane broke over land and sea. The waves rushed furiously far up the beach with a booming sound, as if they would sweep the cottages away; and the rain fell in

blinding torrents. Hark! how it beats on the roofs!

Within the cottage of Annen's parents, the father and mother sat either side of the chimney, and talked in low, anxious tones, and hoped that our Lord would have mercy upon all poor sailors.

"Oh, what would I give to know that Franz was safe!" said the weeping Annen, as she wandered to and fro, with her trembling fingers clasped together.

"Nay, then, he was not to come just now," said her mother, tenderly. "If a ship is lost to-night, it will not be his, and that, at least, is a good thought."

The little girl looked out,—but it was so black —there was nothing but the reflection of the candle in the window-pane, and her own pale face looking back at her.

Suddenly there arose a cry without, and then one of the neighbours, who had sung so merrily on

the children's birthday evening, entered the cottage. He could scarcely close the door for the mad furious wind.

"A ship has struck on the reefs!" he exclaimed. We fear every moment she will go down. Wilt thou come and help us with the boats, friend Gottfried?"

The sturdy fisherman rose instantly, and went with his comrade out into the storm.

"Mother, I must go!" cried Annen. "Oh, God grant that Franz is safe this awful night!"

"Nay, then, thou shalt not go alone," said the old Margrethe, and she arose to accompany her.

The parrot fluttered restlessly on its perch, and cried, in uneasy tones, "*Mein liebchen* Annen!" The wild wind caught the words, and seemed to Annen to shriek back, "*Mein liebchen* Annen!"

"Mother, mother!" she gasped out, as they struggled to the beach, "dost thou not hear him calling! It is his voice,—Franz's voice!" and she

rushed wildly down to where a crowd of brave men and lamenting women were huddled together, praying, crying for help where no help could be.

And now the rain had ceased,—for these summer storms, so terrible while they last, are short,—and the moon looked out from a rift in the black clouds. Then,—oh, then! they saw the ship, and a great cry of pity arose from the beach.

Ah! now she was parting amidships! for no human work could stand under the inconceivable violence of the cruel, awful waves. The women ran wildly up and down on the sands and hid their faces. The brave fishermen had already manned a boat, but could not launch her through the raging surf. The fated ship turned towards the shore, and like a human being driven mad, lifted herself up, leaped into a mighty wave,—and was gone!

Another huge wave came roaring towards the shore with such an angry sound that they all shrank from it. It bore a dark burden on its

bosom, that rolled helplessly on the pitiless sands as the water receded. The crowd, with Annen in their midst, closed around it; a fisherman, his bare arm tattooed with an anchor, raised a lantern. The light fell upon the beautiful face of a boy,—a sailor,—Franz!

Insensible,—dead! Beaten to death by that cruel wave; his good and loving heart stilled for ever.

They placed him on the narrow bed of straw in his father's cottage, with the white shroud about him, and Annen's cross upon his breast. There he lay so calm, smiling in his quiet sleep, waiting for his eternal birthday in heaven.

Ah! one can do nothing against death! But our Lord was kind to Franz's parents and to the little Annen. She struggled to be patient, even cheerful, and that goes a great way.

And some time, if she keep her heart pure, she too will have an eternal birthday in the

Beautiful Land, to live with our Lord and Franz evermore.

The big tears were standing in the boys' eyes as they finished reading. They were quite still for a moment; then Theodore said,—"What a beautiful story: only I *do* wish that Franz could have got safely back. Poor little fellow!"

"So do I," said Frank. "He was my German namesake. And dear little Annen,—I'm so very sorry for her. Let's write to Aunt Fanny to know if it is a true story."

"Yes; and thank her a thousand and one times for it."

"Yes; and hint that a little more of the same refreshment will be most acceptable."

"Yes; and call her your particular pet name. Direct it so on the outside."

"Yes, I fancy we won't."

"Yes, I fancy we will."

Frank ran off laughing; and whether Aunt Fanny got a letter directed to a "pea-green, dumpling, darling Aunt Fanny"* or not, perhaps you will know one of these days.

* Note to my little English Readers.—Aunt Fanny *did* get such a letter, to the utter astonishment of the postman who brought it. Did you ever hear of anything more funny and odd than these droll American boys?

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

THEODORE had received letters from almost every big boy in the school before he was able to go out, and they gave him so much happiness that his mother determined, the week before her dear boy went back to school, to invite all his kind companions to a grand party.

I wish you could have been at this most delightful party. It was worth a long journey to see so many bright happy faces.

They all came before sundown, and had some fine games of ball, shooting with bows and arrows, playing hide and seek, and running races in the beautiful grounds surrounding the house. Every-

body did just as he liked; if he had wanted to put his head in his pocket, or walk on all fours, he could have done so; but there were no idle, stupid boys or girls to be seen: all were playing with might and main,—and Theodore, who now only used a cane once in a while, was the happiest of the happy. A bright, glowing colour mantled in his cheeks as his beloved schoolmates crowded eagerly around him, shaking his hands, slapping him on the back, and calling him "old fellow!" in joyous, loving tones.

When it was getting too dark to play outside, a pleasant tinkle of a bell called the company in to tea. They sat down to an immense long table, which seemed almost breaking down under the good things that were heaped upon it.

Ben Chickering declared there were mountains of bread and butter, promontories of sweetmeats, pyramids of cake, oceans of milk, rivers of cream, and no end of forty other good things; and, to

crown all, just as they were settled in their seats, who should come in but Baked Pears, the dear old Professor, with his hair combed out of his eyes, his gaiters buttoned, and not a speck of dust to be seen on his clothes anywhere! his face lighted up with smiles no man, woman, or child could resist.

The Brigadier was with him, in a stunning cap, which it must have taken the milliner some days to make, it was so perfectly covered with bugles in all directions. They rattled at a great rate whenever the good old lady moved half-an-inch; and the boys hoped she would wear it whenever they undertook any extra piece of mischief, as it would rattle a warning of her approach, and give them time to run away.

Theodore welcomed his kind teacher and the Brigadier heartily, and, grace having been said, they fell with such a good will upon the dainties, that mountains, pyramids, oceans, and all, van-

ished in double-quick time. They talked, if anything, faster than they ate.

Many were the sly laughing allusions to the contents of the letters Theodore had received; and when little May called Ned Chickering "Gaggle-gaggleboo," and said it was his Indian name, everybody shouted with laughter, and insisted on hearing the story read.

And a great time they had, for after Ned Chickering's story, all the other stories were called for, and were received with immense applause.

The hours flew by like the wind, and a general "oh!" of astonishment was uttered when some one said it was eleven o'clock. But when the boys bade Theodore good-night, they were rejoiced to know that he would be with them again the next Monday morning; and they parted with increased affection for him and each other,—so true is it that mutual kindness begets mutual affection.

And so ends this volume, in which I have en-

deavoured to show you how beautiful is goodness. If you have been tempted to be mean, cruel, or ill-tempered, kneel down this very night and say the Lord's Prayer from your heart.

If from your very heart you pray "Lead us not into temptation," His answer is ready, by the mouth of His Apostle,—"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."

Oh, my darlings, try to have good little hearts; try to be good and do good. I will try too, so that, when this short life is ended, God may permit me to meet all my dear ones in heaven.

Good-bye, my English and Scottish darlings.

END OF VOL. II.